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A MISJUDGED MONARCH

THE NATIONAL HISTORY OF FRANCE

With an Introduction by

JOHN EDWARD COURTENAY BODLEY
(Corresponding Member of the Institute of France)

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KING CHARLES II.

From a Bust by René Pellé in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

A MISJUDGED MONARCH

(CHARLES STUART)

BY
H. M. IMBERT-TERRY

ILLUSTRATED



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TO
MY WIFE,

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HER PATIENT
FORBEARANCE IN PERMITTING ME TO SPEND
SO MANY HOURS IN SUCH IMMORAL COMPANY.

PREFACE

THIS book does not aspire to be history, for no new facts are adduced. It is a record of the effect which historical facts, gathered from the best sources available, have produced on the mind of one who for the last thirty years has been steeped to the chin in political strife and party warfare, and thus, presumably, has gained some insight into the motives of men and some experience of the trend of public affairs.

Much of the life and reign of the second Charles Stuart is still nebulous. No one can produce positive proof as to the religious opinions which he held; none, up to the present, can speak definitely with regard to the details of the National Finance during his reign.

Mr. Shaw, in his "Beginnings of the National Debt," makes a most valuable contribution towards elucidating the problem; it is to be hoped sincerely that he may soon be in a position to publish a further instalment of his interesting research, for on the two questions of the religion of the King and the state of the National Exchequer hangs the whole purpose of the policy of Charles, whether domestic or foreign.

His theological opinions indubitably prompted his attempts at religious toleration, while his pecuniary necessity must have influenced his dealings with other Powers. Hatred of France obviously biassed many of the writers on his life and actions. Possibly, from the associations of his early and most impressionable years he may have become highly sensitive to the genius of that incomparable nation. Who shall say now that such predilection was unjustifiable?

H. M. I.-T.

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The Author acknowledges with many thanks the courtesy of the authorities of the Victoria and Albert Museum in permitting the insertion in this book of a print of the highly characteristic bust of Charles II, which was executed by René Pellé but a few months before the death of the King.

CHAPTER I.

CHARLES : HIS CHARACTER AND HIS CRITICS.

TUCKED away in the Islip Chapel, a nook of the Abbey at Westminster, stand the waxen effigies of half a dozen Kings and Queens of England.

Prominent among them is the death mask of Charles Stuart, the second of the name, and although the hand of Time and of an even more potent destroyer, the artistic renovator of to-day, has done much to remove the majesty of death, yet sufficient individuality remains in the face to show a dark harsh-featured man, whose drawn cheeks, strong lineaments and pouting lips present a marked contrast to the formal commonplace of the companion figures.

It is reported that the late Queen Victoria on two or three occasions visited the chapel and gazed with interest at this relic of her predecessor. It has moreover been stated by one who accompanied her that she expressed her astonishment that a king whom the majority of historians depict as the embodiment of licence and debauchery should possess features indicating strength and character in no small degree.

The first decade of the twentieth century has already swept away some venerable institutions and dissipated more than one popular belief. In such an atmosphere of political change may not the question fairly be asked, have writers, great and small, who continuously describe Charles, at the best, as a good-tempered libertine, at the worst, as the incarnation of political turpitude and personal debauchery, presented a true and accurate estimate of his purpose and his performance ?

In one direction at least public opinion may now be disposed to do justice to his policy. Once more after the lapse of nearly sixty years this nation has contracted an

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engagement with France, a country and race which in the past it has been the fashion to describe as the hereditary enemy of England, but which we are beginning to think should be deemed our natural ally, since neither commercially nor politically do her and our interests necessarily come into antagonism in any part of the world.

Among the serious charges laid against Charles II. as a king, the heaviest is the allegation that he betrayed his country to the French enemy, sold her interests to gratify his own lusts, and spent the later portion of his life content the servile pensioner of Louis XIV.

During the preceding reigns, those of his father and his grandfather, a curious change spread over the minds of the British people. The dread of the Spanish invader which, in the days of Elizabeth, clouded the whole country like a pestilent miasma, disappeared never to return, but in its place a marked distrust gradually arose of the powerful neighbour across the Channel whose aspirations, then directed by the greatest statesman of the age, threatened in many directions the interests of this island and its continental allies.¹

As years went on this feeling increased in intensity, until, from the time of Marlborough, almost a contemporary of Charles II., to the days of Wellington, the power of France, the ambitious designs of her rulers, to the average Briton loomed as an ever-increasing menace to his safety and bar to his prosperity, and the bare suspicion that an English king could have secret dealings with such an insidious and dangerous foe was in itself sufficient to ensure his condemnation as an enemy of his people.

The close connection with Louis XIV. and the French nation which Charles effected, together with the indisputable profligacy of his court, provided the chief reasons on which succeeding generations based their adverse opinion of his character and his policy, an opinion which totally ignored the fact that the French alliance, with its logical sequel war with Holland, laid the foundations of

¹ Pepys, 30th September, 1661.

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England's naval and commercial supremacy, accompanied by all those advantages to national prosperity and private wealth which inevitably accompany a great expansion of trade and industry.

That Charles possessed many legitimate reasons for believing that the alliance with France would prove most conducive to the interests of the country he ruled, as well as to his own benefit, is undoubted. The assured conviction that the English people had its heart set on increased trade, the keen appreciation he showed in all that concerned the navy, and the intelligent encouragement which both he and his brother James gave to the attempts which were being made in the direction of colonial expansion are clearly discernible in his letters, his speeches and his actions.

An alliance with France might possibly advance each of these schemes; the continued power of Holland would inevitably destroy them.

Besides, from a personal point of view, Charles had no love for Holland. The States-General did not treat him with consideration during his long exile, and to a man who suffered adversity, penury and neglect as he and his family had suffered; to a monarch who held, as his father held before him, high and determined views concerning the prerogatives of the Crown; to a Churchman whose religious instincts, even if not very pronounced or definite, were certainly neither narrow nor severe, it naturally appeared preferable to contract an alliance with a nation ruled by a splendid and autocratic prince, a loyal son of the Holy Catholic Church, rather than to enter into engagements with a country republican in government, Lutheran in creed, and bourgeois in sentiment. But the French policy engendered continuous disputes between the King and his Parliament, and this friction between the monarch and the Legislature produced in historians of succeeding ages an attitude towards Charles most injurious to his reputation as a statesman, while the undoubted immorality of his surroundings sullied his character as a man.

Yet among his own people he was popular when living

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and regretted when dead ; only from the writers and politicians of succeeding reigns did the criticism of his actions become embittered and severe, largely because they themselves were supporting a dynasty which waged ruthless war with France and were strongly opposed to a policy which they supposed took its rise from measures which Charles Stuart initiated or designed.

From the uprising, in the days of Elizabeth, of that curious compound of truculence and hypocrisy sometimes tinged with idealism, which, then as now, bore the name of Puritanism, until the flight of James II. and the arrival of Dutch William, the mind of Parliament was chiefly bent on the subject of religion, and the controversies which agitated the country were all connected with the supremacy of one school of religious thought, the dread of another or the toleration of a third.

The autocracy of the Church of England quite as much as the constitutional question caused the downfall of Charles I., the fear of popery led to the deposition of James II. ; both of these influences were in constant activity during the five and twenty years after the Restoration, with the result that nearly all the contemporaneous writers on historical events belonged to religious sects which had suffered persecution or to political parties which owed their ascendancy to the reversal of those principles which Charles II. during his life successfully maintained.

There was, it is true, a short period when the pressure of intolerable tyranny drove men of various shades of opinion into agreement for a while.

The Restoration sprang from the absorbing fear which held all moderate men that the nation would fall under the complete dominion of the army.

Morrice, the dependant of Monck, on his recommendation afterwards made Secretary of State, declared that the army kept England in a state of perpetual earthquake. This dread, permeating the whole community, drove Cavalier and Puritan, Churchman and Dissenter into one phalanx, unanimous in the desire, even if in no other respect, for the

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restoration of the Monarchy, the only fixed system of government suitable for the wants of the people.

By this combination of moderate men the Restoration was effected, but once the glamour and sentiment of the King's return to his people had worn off the old struggle began again.

Although Charles, before his return, solemnly pledged himself in the Declaration of Breda to respect the liberty of all phases of religious thought, the spirit of Parliament, fostered by Clarendon, tenaciously asserted the supremacy of the Church of England. But the vicissitudes of his early life had made Charles tolerant, genuinely tolerant, of the religious tenets of others. Much of the opposition which checked and thwarted his plans during the first half of his reign sprang from the fact that he failed to see that the majority of those who restored him to his father's throne were determined to uphold the unquestioned supremacy of his father's Church. From this arose the continued contests between the King and his Parliament—a contest which not only created most of the difficulties which troubled Charles, but also greatly exercised the mind of those Whig chroniclers who, constituting themselves the champions of parliamentary government, consequently anathematised a monarch who systematically neglected his House of Commons and found a way of ruling his country without its advice or assistance.

Notwithstanding that subsequent events reversed the whole policy for which Charles strove, it is indisputable that in the latter years of his reign he obtained, largely by his personal efforts, a signal triumph over that sturdy parliamentary opposition which, though calling itself the "Country Party," was soon dubbed "Whig"; and if the obstinacy and folly of his successor James had not neutralised his brother's efforts, it is probable that William of Orange would never have been numbered among the Kings of England.

Thus while the policy of Charles was so framed as to obtain but scant justice at the hands of writers in the subsequent

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reigns, the habits of the period conduced to give an exaggerated picture of the defects of his private life.

Lord Macaulay, in a characteristic sentence, inveighs against "that vile phrase the dignity of history," and complains that the mistaken idea contained in the words is responsible for the omission of many details which historians consider beneath their dignity to insert but which frequently prove most illustrative of the period they are describing.

It has been well said that only a complete knowledge of the literature of an age can secure a comprehensive and accurate survey of the historical events which then occurred. The literature of the reign of the second Charles reproduces every salient feature of the times in a manner scarcely paralleled by any other epoch, but certainly the writers can hardly be justly accused of too severe taste in their treatment of the subject.

It was the age of diaries; the apotheosis of scandal. From Pepys, the incarnation of bourgeois snobbery, by way of Evelyn, Grammont, Lake and Sidney to the crowd of anonymous writers who revelled in libels and secret histories, the stream of personal reminiscence flows on, sometimes apocryphal, sometimes true, always affording a lively picture of the times, but a picture which is so overcrowded that the accuracy of the design is lost in the number and vivacity of the details or hidden beneath the meretricious brilliancy of the colouring.

This outpouring of personal anecdote and reminiscence has drawn undue attention to the private and social aspect of the reign, creating at the same time a strong feeling of reprobation at the gross licentiousness which existed.

Until the last few years the general idea of Charles was drawn either from these effusions of scandalous anecdotists or from the sketch of the King which prefaces Lord Macaulay's great work.

But Lord Macaulay, all deference being paid to his towering ability, yet remains a Whig of the Whigs, every line he wrote reflecting the idea imbued in his mind that when a beneficent Providence created man, it designed a Whig

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Ministry to rule over him. Therefore it is not surprising that he too judged somewhat unsympathetically a Stuart king, who with all his deficiencies and faults, amid many pitfalls and despite innumerable dangers, achieved that which both the father who preceded and the brother who succeeded him signally failed in doing, retaining his throne and transmitting it to his successor.

Yet Lord Macaulay in one respect has done justice to Charles in making ample allowance for the extraordinary difficulty of his position.

Although those who restored him to his throne in no way formally restricted the royal prerogative, Charles was far too clear-sighted to believe that he could attempt to wield, in aught but name, the despotic authority for which his father fought. Parliament had tasted the sweets of power ; effusively loyal as the House of Commons proved at the commencement of the reign, yet it unmistakably showed that it meant to retain to the full extent those privileges which it gained by the sword during the Civil War.

That the King knew this feeling is demonstrated not only by his words and public announcements, but by the far more convincing fact that he never refused his consent to a Bill which had passed both Houses of Parliament, even though he might strongly differ from the policy embodied in it or greatly object to the effect it might produce on his friends or himself.

He believed in his prerogative, he exercised and maintained it to the utmost of his power, but the method of enforcing his will differed fundamentally from that employed by his father. The first Charles committed those who opposed him to a cell in the Tower, the second Charles bestowed on them a place in the Exchequer ; the result frequently being the same, but the change in procedure bears eloquent testimony to the increased power of the Legislature, which might be bought but could not be bullied.

Throughout the whole of his life, from the moment that, by his father's murder, he became the rightful wearer of the British crown, among all the squalid surroundings of his

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exile, through all the sensual indulgence of his return, one clear design invariably checked, controlled and dominated his actions : to regain his throne, retain his throne, and maintain the legitimate succession to that throne.

In this he attained complete success, and it may well be argued that if James had shown but a portion of his brother's skill and diplomacy he might have ended his life at Whitehall and not at St. Germain en Laye.

But the character of the two brothers differed essentially. Quite as dissolute and free-living as the elder, James, the younger, possessed none of the qualities which form a successful king, and least of all that spirit of adaptability and resource which is necessary to one who has to steer his course in stormy times.

The problems which Charles succeeded one way or the other in solving or evading proved too difficult for the clumsier and more obstinate nature of James, for as an intimate member of the Royal Household once observed of the former, "He was endowed with a great measure of mind and of king craft." " 'Twas much to have been wished that his brother had enjoyed that most useful talent." ¹

Especially did James lack that quality, so distinct in Charles, of tolerance, an attribute which would have served him better than far more brilliant endowments.

Tolerance in every degree formed part of Charles's nature, a tolerance fostered and increased by the education and experience of his youth and early manhood. He saw his father lose his life for the sake of the Church of England, he himself lived in the midst of the hypocrisy and narrow dogmatism of the Scottish Covenanters, then dwelt within the influence and glamour of the ornate ritual of the Holy Catholic faith, as practised in those gorgeous shrines which adorn France and Flanders. The result of such diverse knowledge showed in his character. "To be easy himself and to make everybody else so" is the description given of him by North.² It had been said of his grandfather,

¹ Aylesbury Memoirs, p. 40.

² "Examen," p. 45.

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Henri Quatre, that "by shifting his religion he had yielded his place in Paradise for a palace in Paris." With regard to the grandson, it may assuredly be asserted that never did he intend to endanger his life or imperil his throne for the sake of the Thirty-Nine Articles, never did he propose to exchange the object of his ambition, the sceptre of England, for a martyr's crown.

To the average reader of to-day Charles II. is known only as a man of perfect manners and most imperfect morality. The sole kingly attribute with which he is credited is a desire of emulating the example of his ancestor and predecessor Henry VIII. both in the joviality of his disposition and the variety of his connubial undertakings ; although, unlike the Bluff Monarch, Charles did not think it incumbent on him to demonstrate his allegiance to the Church of England by celebrating the marriage ceremony with the same extreme frequency.

His only occupations and amusements are supposed to have been those of chatting over a garden wall with well-bred ease to Nell Gwyn ; lolling in amorous contentment among the languishing glances, curled ringlets, and redundant figures of the Carolean beauties as depicted by Sir Peter Lely ; or hunting a moth in the boudoir of the Castle-maine while the Dutch guns were thundering in the Thames.

To those who seriously consider the various difficulties which confronted Charles and the address with which he overcame them this picture is absurd.

He succeeded in accomplishing a task which proved too heavy for the father who preceded and the brother who succeeded him. They closed their existence, the one on a scaffold, the other in exile, while he lived and died King of England, beloved and mourned by his subjects.

That the court of Charles II. was profligate and dissolute is an established fact ; but it is as fallacious to say that the personal laxity of the King caused the immorality of the court as it is to allege that the evil living of Charles's courtiers produced the general decay of purity which at that time characterised the whole nation.

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The orgy of immorality which accompanied the Restoration arose, as a natural reaction, from the unnatural social conditions engendered by the hidden vices, false religion, and rampant hypocrisy of the Puritan domination.

Hypocrisy was the prevailing feature of the years preceding the Restoration ; a man can no more be upbraided for being a hypocrite in the days of Cromwell than a Chinaman can be censured for wearing a pigtail in the streets of Peking under the Manchu dynasty.

In many respects, and in many minds, Puritanism existed as a sincere and earnest creed, but the average human being of the seventeenth century, imbued with a natural love of bright surroundings and cheery pursuits, did not and could not become a whole-hearted believer in a gloomy profession which deprived him of all delight in life ; for no real lover of the beautiful ever has been or can be a Puritan.

The fear that their liberties might be infringed aroused the sturdy independence of the English people and ranged them in opposition to their King ; but the moment that fear disappeared the inevitable reaction set in against a system of life and thought which by its strait-laced rigidity hindered all natural and wholesome impulses ; and when the iron moral rule of the professed Puritan became relaxed, as a necessary consequence, looseness of living permeated the nation.

The middle classes as typified in Pepys constantly visited the theatres, gossiped, if not worse, with the actresses, and led, in their degree, as dissolute a life as the average courtier ; while, lower in the social scale, drunkenness and disorder became the normal condition of existence, for in all the writers of the period frequent references can be found to the general laxity of living and want of social restraint.¹

It is a favourite phrase among certain biographers of Charles to attribute his immoral propensities to a somewhat distant Provençal strain in his blood, inherited through his maternal grandfather and indicated by the dark appearance

¹ Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 35 ; Burnet, Vol. I., p. 60.

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and swarthy complexion, which formed one of his most noticeable features.

Certainly an admixture of Scotch and French blood is hardly conducive to continence of living, yet, to an unprejudiced mind, it is not quite obvious that this descendant of the Stuarts and the Bourbons so greatly exceeded in lustful indulgence the Teutonic successors who in due course occupied his throne.

That "wee wee German laddie who, taken from his kale yard," on the death of Queen Anne, wore the crown of Great Britain, neither in his public nor his private acts compares too favourably with the much-decried Charles. Yet historians eulogise George I. as a constitutional and respectable ruler, apparently because he left this country as much alone as possible, professed a religion which savoured of Lutheranism, possessed mistresses who, if frail in character, were substantial in person, and spoke a language which at no time was comprehended by his people.

Licentious as was the life of Charles II., its immorality did not greatly exceed that of George II., while whether as a man or a monarch Charles Stuart showed immeasurable superiority to that despicable *poseur* George IV. Without implicitly agreeing with the author of "Anti-Machiavelli," "The amours of a good king are always deemed a pardonable weakness, providing they are not attended with injustice or violence;" yet much must be conceded to the peculiar position of a royal personage at that period and to the special temptations which then beset him. A systematic education to prepare the future occupant of a throne for the duties to be performed and the snares to be avoided is even now considered absolutely necessary, but this training in the case of Charles never took place. But a child when the Civil War broke out, his life, at the age when a boy is most impressionable, consisted in hurried journeying from one place to another, lacking that constant discipline, supervision, and companionship so absolutely necessary to prepare an acute and high-spirited nature for the work to

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be done and the temptations avoided in the career he perforce must follow.

Several dissertations on the qualities and character of Charles II. exist. George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave (afterwards Duke of Buckinghamshire), Burnet, Clarendon and others, who lived in his society and were afforded opportunities of analysing his motives, have placed their conclusions on paper. And yet it is no easy task to form an accurate diagnosis. These writers, all closely connected with the life of Charles, but all occupying different positions and swayed by most diverse opinions and motives, consequently differ in vital respects as to his real nature. That he possessed much ability is undeniable; that he displayed great personal charm is universally admitted; but yet it is evident, allowing for the bias of enemies and the favour of friends, that he suffered from patent defects. The chief fault in his character, apart from his immoral propensities, appears to have been his indolence. "I will not deny that naturally I am more lazy than I ought to be," he wrote to his "deare, deare sister" Henriette.

Clarendon, to his face, told him that he was too fond of pleasure and did not sufficiently love business, while Mulgrave, in making a like accusation, qualified it by adding, "but in the midst of all his remissness, so industrious and indefatigable in some particular occasion that no man could either toil longer or manage better;"¹—a description which is corroborated by Grammont, who asserts that Charles displayed great ability in urgent affairs but was incapable of application when they were not so.²

Halifax, whose essay on "Character of Charles II." is certainly the most elaborate though not the most intuitive analysis of his nature, makes a significant remark, which again finds expression in Mulgrave: "The thing called sauntering is a stronger temptation to princes than to

¹ Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, "Memoirs," p. 80.

² Grammont, p. 105.

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others.”¹ Charles found ample opportunity in his early life of yielding to this temptation.

During the squalid years of his long exile there must have been many moments when he, willy nilly, could do nothing but try to kill time as best he might. Forbidden to serve in either the French or the Spanish armies, as his brother James had done, wandering from place to place the dissatisfied guest of unwilling hosts, too poor to be able to indulge in the pursuits and amusements of his rank, too mercurial and light-hearted to apply himself seriously to grave studies, by force of circumstances he fell into the habit of lounging part of the day away, and the custom once acquired he never relinquished.

Mulgrave's description of Charles in many respects seems to be inspired by a genuine knowledge of the man, written, moreover, by one with little personal bias or political predilection—a statement which cannot be made about Halifax, who frequently and fundamentally differed from Charles on questions of State, or Burnet, whose facts are generally false and whose reflections are invariably unsound.

Mulgrave also mentions this habit of “sauntering,” but with a somewhat different application: “A pleasure called sauntering and talking without restraint was the true sultana queen he delighted on.”² It can well be imagined that the formal routine of business at the Privy Council proved much less alluring to the Merrie Monarch than wandering on a fine day by the side of the lake in St. James's Park, feeding the ducks, and enjoying the company of the most beautiful women and the wittiest men in the kingdom.

The wish to avoid the tedium of ordinary business, the natural desire to escape the importunity of those “sturdy beggars” who thronged the court, account for Charles's habit of retiring to the seclusion of his private apartments, and his biographer himself declares: “I am of opinion that

¹ Halifax, “Life,” Vol. II., p. 350.

² Buckingham, “Memoirs,” p. 78.

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there was as much laziness as love in all those hours he passes among his mistresses." ¹

But when necessity demanded, this indolence could be thrown off, and then the royal activity became phenomenal.

"The King do tire all the people about him with early rising"; ² "The King surprised everyone with coming to Council at 8 in the morning," ³ are extracts from the journals of those who suffered from their monarch's energy, and further testimony is borne to Charles's capacity for business, when he felt disposed, by Lord Anglesey, who complains: "We must be forced to get the King to come to Council, for I do not see that we do anything at any time but when he is here." ⁴

Even Burnet grudgingly allows that, though the King hated business, yet "if brought to it he would stay as long as his ministers had work for him." ⁵

When the course of events threatened any project on which Charles had set his heart, he exercised his abilities to the fullest extent and carried his point, regardless of the advice or opposition of his Council: "He lived with his ministers as he did with his mistresses, he used them, but he was not in love with them," ⁶ acidly remarks Halifax, and this statement, which bears the impress of truth, testifies to the fact that Charles, when he thought the occasion sufficiently important, took the reins into his own hands, his ministers playing subordinate parts.

It is acknowledged that he had no favourites, and to this want of confidence in his councillors, as well as to the phenomenal difficulties of his position, may be traced that dissimulation of which he is so much accused and which, even his best friends allow, was a marked trait in his character, although one qualifies the admission by saying "that it was never used to do an ill action." ⁷

¹ Buckingham, "Memoirs," p. 78.

² Pepys, 15th August, 1660.

³ Hatton Correspondence, Vol. II., p. 1; also *vide* Vol. I., p. 28.

⁴ Pepys, 27th February, 1664-5.

⁵ Burnet, Vol. I., 61.

⁶ Halifax, "Life," Vol. II., p. 351.

⁷ Aylesbury Memoirs, p. 95.

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Trusting no one and confiding in few, Charles, with all his good humour, learned to veil his feelings and dissemble his words. "Those who knew his face fixed their eyes there and thought it of more importance to see than to hear what he said. His face was as little blab as most men's . . . but yet it would sometimes tell tales to a good observer."¹

In the sphere of foreign politics he shone supreme, his Lord Keeper North declaring that he understood foreign affairs better than all his council and councillors put together,² while another biographer asserts that his journeys abroad gave him an insight into the affairs of Europe not often possessed by monarchs.³

This indeed may well be the case, for although, after the age of twelve or thereabouts, he appears to have received no systematic education, although on his arrival in France he could barely understand, certainly could not speak, the language, yet his quickness of apprehension soon enabled him to surmount these difficulties and to become a good and facile linguist. Hyde's letter to Dr. Creighton, an enthusiastic divine who wrote a fulsome dedication to the young King, gives interesting information on this point: "You must remember that although our master has taken great pains, and with most excellent success, in modern languages, yet in the Latin he is too unskilful by the inexcusable negligence of those who should have laid the foundation."⁴

If Charles did not understand Latin he certainly spoke his own language with great success. As a story teller he appears to have been inimitable, although, like most good story tellers, apt to repeat himself; as a conversationalist he always shone, being gifted not only with wit but also tact and good humour. Temple, who had no reason to admire or like the King, is compelled, despite himself, to bear witness to these and other qualities which undoubtedly won for

¹ Halifax, Vol. II., p. 348.

² North, "Lives," p. 251.

³ Aurelian Cook.

⁴ Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. III., 567.

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Charles that popularity which he certainly enjoyed among most of his intimates and the great majority of his subjects : " I never saw him in better humour nor ever knew a more agreeable conversation when he was so, great quickness of conception, great pleasantness of wit, great variety of knowledge, more observation and truer judgment of men than one would have imagined by so careless and easy a manner as was natural to him in all he said and did." And then, after dilating on the love of ease, the desire that all around him should be happy and contented which made him apt to be too easily persuaded, the writer continues : " Yet sure no prince has more qualities to make him loved with a great many to make him esteemed, and all without a grain of pride or vanity in his whole constitution ; nor can he suffer vanity in any kind, growing uneasy upon the first approaches of it and turning it off into something else." ¹

It was this complete absence of affectation, combined with much natural good humour, which caused his subjects to praise and admire their King to the end of his life. Waller, the poet, attributes this popularity, in addition to the personal gifts, to the fact that Charles was the first English-born king who wore the crown of the three kingdoms, but certainly that which largely commended him to the hearts of his people lay in the truly English devotion he displayed to the Navy and all that appertained to it. " Shipping and sea affairs seemed so much his talent both for knowledge as well as for inclination that a war of that kind was rather an entertainment than any disturbance to his thoughts. 'Tis certain no prince was ever more fitted by nature for his country's interest than he was in all his maritime inclinations." ²

From his boyhood to the last years of his life this love of the sea and the craft upon it continued, the pages of Pepys, Bruce and Cooke bearing witness not only to the deep interest but also to the technical knowledge which Charles brought to bear upon the management of the Navy yards. He made " Commissioners of the Navy from old ship's

¹ " Temple Memoirs," Vol. II., p. 409.

² Buckingham, pp. 77, 78.

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carpenters, and I have heard them say that there was no one understood the theory of that art better than the King and by his directions which were put into practice the building of ships of war was improved to the last nicety.”¹

An aptitude for mechanics and chemistry proved useful to Charles in this direction, and it is said that he “was much set on several preparations of mercury, chiefly the fixing it;” the same writer paying a compliment to his knowledge of navigation and expressing an opinion that “above all he understood the architecture of ships so perfectly that in this respect he was exact rather more than became a prince.”²

He loved exercise, “a smart walk, a mouthful of fresh air and a little ingenious raillery,”³ as one biographer quaintly puts it, were his favourite pursuits. A fine rider, a good fisherman, an expert tennis player, a strong swimmer, the open air always attracted the Merrie Monarch, that is to say, in the day time; his evening occupations, unfortunately for his reputation, taking a different direction.

Yet to two vices, common to court and kingdom, he showed no partiality.

~~He disliked gambling and evinced a strong objection to~~ losing even £5 at tennis.⁴ He grew very uneasy when, in the gallery at Whitehall, his mistresses played deeply, possibly because he surmised that, although they might play, Old Rowley, to give him his cant name at court, would certainly one way or the other do the paying.

Among the many vices of this vicious age drinking to excess prevailed in every class of society. High and low, rich and poor drank healths and toasts until overcome with wild intoxication; even Andrew Marvell, the Puritan poet and biting satirist of the weaknesses of other men, if we are to believe old Aubrey,⁵ kept bottles of wine in his room and drank liberally to refresh his spirit and exalt his muse.

¹ Aylesbury Memoirs, p. 95.

² Burnet, vol. I., p. 61.

³ Aurelian Cook.

⁴ Buckingham, p. 80.

⁵ Aubrey's “Brief Lives.”

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Charles in this particular sinned far less than his companions ; indeed in later life he practised comparative abstinence. An attempt has been made by some writers of late to fix this sin as well as every other delinquency upon the much-abused monarch ; the chief foundation for the allegation being a scandalous tale of Pepys, as usual told second-hand, concerning a riotous meeting at the house of Sir George Carteret, where the King and the Duke of York "were all drunk" and "in such maudlin pickle as never people were."¹

The tittle-tattle of Pepys, spicy as it is, should always be taken *cum grano salis*. But although Pepys tells with gusto this story of a drunken frolic, at another time from personal experience he declares "the King seems to be a very sober man,"² and in this direction additional testimony can be gathered from Hatton³ and Bruce,⁴ both close and intimate personal friends of Charles, the one being witness to the King's sobriety in his youth and the other in his latter years.

The strongest contradiction of any statement that Charles habitually or frequently indulged in excessive drinking can be found in the notorious fact that he took the greatest care of his own health, was a very early riser, spent hours a day in athletic pursuits, walked strenuously and exhibited great physical vigour. He played tennis with assiduity and skill, a game requiring much fitness both of mind and limb. Indeed, so strenuously did he exert himself that, to quote Waller :

"No sooner has he touched the flying ball,
But 'tis already more than half the Mall,
And such a fury from his arm has got
As from a smoking culv'rin were shot."

This perhaps is poetic licence, but there are other authorities which show that Charles was an expert tennis player, and

¹ Pepys, 23rd September, 1667.

² *Ibid.*, 17th May, 1660.

³ Nicolas Correspondence, Vol. II., p. 156.

⁴ Aylesbury, p. 85.

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certainly on such occasions he must have conquered his habitual indolence, for it is related of him that one day when, as was his wont, he weighed himself, both before and after a game, with the steel-yard which he carried for this purpose, he found, much to his satisfaction, that he had lost 4 lbs. from the exercise.

All his biographers agree that Charles not only loved walking but invariably walked extremely fast ; opinions differ, however, as to whether he acquired this practice from a wish to improve his physical condition or from a stronger desire to avoid the importunate suitors who persistently dunned him for payment of debts political and domestic.

“ He walked by his watch,” says Halifax ; “ And when he pulled it out to look upon it, skilful men would make haste with what they had to say to him.”

A story is told by the Rev. Mr. Teonge, a naval chaplain, whose captain took him to Whitehall and waited in the corridor until he could present the reverend gentleman to the King. When the monarch appeared the chaplain, full of earnest loyalty, knelt down and fervently kissed the hand which his Majesty presented, who immediately, without giving time for any inconvenient request, genially exclaimed : “ God bless you, God bless you both together ” ; and walked along the gallery “ at his wonted large pace.”¹

Charles was fond of blessing ; it was a Stuart attribute to distribute favours which cost the donor nothing.

An engrossing selfishness, a cold disregard for the feelings of others and a complete want of tenderness are ingredients which his critics also assert go far to compose the character of the second Charles.

Selfishness he certainly possessed ; the main object of his life, the preservation of his throne, naturally made him self-centred, but he aimed at no ignoble object even though in the spirit of the times he may have shown little high-mindedness in the manner in which he carried out his design.

But there were many moments when Charles displayed much consideration for the feelings of others.

¹ Teonge's Diary.

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He was the most merciful king who ever reigned over this country, and although on two occasions, the executions of Vane and Russel, great exception has been taken to his severity, yet in each case, from the point of view of his most cherished project, the maintenance of the throne and the legitimate succession, the danger of the moment justified the harshness of the deed.

To all who assisted him in his flight after the Worcester defeat he extended wide and thoughtful generosity, giving special protection to them in the exercise of their religion—for the Penderells and others who sheltered him were Roman Catholics—and paying to them punctually a liberal allowance.

To allege that he felt no pure love or genuine attachment to any one in the world is to ignore completely the deep and abiding tenderness he always showed to his sister Henriette.

No more charming episode in the life of any royal personages can be found than that shown by the correspondence between this brother and “his deare Minette.”

No matter how important the occasion, how weary physically or mentally the King might be, he always found time to write to his “deare, deare sister” and tell her concerning his movements and his designs.

That he loved her earnestly and whole-heartedly is revealed in nearly every letter of the long series: “I am sure I would venture all I have in the world to serve you and have nothing so neare my harte as how I may find occasion to expresse the tender passion I have for my dearest Minette;”¹ and this is but one of the score of loving effusions which he wrote to the graceful and talented girl who, during her short life, played a great part in the world of political intrigue, and acted as a partner with her brother in those negotiations with France which so deeply tinged the complexion of his reign.

On more than one occasion Charles also displayed an affectionate and dutiful regard for his mother, notwith-

¹ “Madame,” by Mrs. Henry Ady, p. 138.

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standing that in his worst hour of need she gave but little consideration to his welfare.

“The truth is, never any children had so good a mother as we have, and you and I shall never have any dispute but only who loves her best, and in this I will never yield to you”¹ This expresses the feelings he invariably showed, and his whole treatment of the widowed queen of his murdered father left nothing to be desired from whatever point of view it may be regarded.

It also cannot be doubted that the Duke of Monmouth filled a very warm place in the affections of his reputed father ; only a sincere and genuine love could have induced Charles to treat a selfish and ungrateful schemer with such merciful consideration.

While the whole character of Charles shows the evil effects of a desultory and undisciplined life in his early manhood and the want of a systematic course of education in his youth, in nothing are these influences so apparent as in his religious belief. Macaulay observes that Charles spent his life dawdling in suspense between Hobbism and popery ; Halifax insinuates that at heart he always professed Roman Catholicism, although he deemed it politic to affect indifference to all religious ideas ; Mulgrave dubs him a deist, and each writer of the age offers fresh suggestions on this interesting topic.

In the light of modern thought it is not difficult to form a logical opinion on the matter. In those days if a man did not follow one of the stereotyped religious dogmas he ran the risk of being rejected by all as a disbeliever in Divine Truth. Yet by the natural rebound from the unnatural rigidity of Puritanism many distinguished men, finding small comfort in the exercise of the austere profession of the Non-conformists and not much greater attraction in the Church of England, then busy in asserting its supremacy over all other creeds, became doubters if not unbelievers.

Charles himself expressly told Burnet that he was not an atheist, but that he did not believe that “God would make

¹ “Madame,” by Mrs. Henry Ady, p. 121.

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a man miserable for taking a little pleasure out of the way ”; ¹ and this idea is more fully developed in the interesting description of Charles’s tenets inserted in Carte’s “ Life of Ormonde ”: “ Although the King showed but little concern for religion he did not want a sense of it. He often expressed his belief of a Deity and a Messiah as foretold in the Old Testament; of a future state and other doctrines; but he had very large notions of God’s mercy that he would not make his creatures for ever miserable on account of their personal failings. Upon this notion he indulged himself in his pleasures, but had frequently his hours of retirement for the exercise of his private devotions.” ²

That an all-merciful Creator will not inflict infinite punishment for a finite sin is a belief which may savour of Latitudinarianism, but it cannot be justly said to denote an atheistic frame of mind.

Many circumstances in Charles’s life negative the assumption that he ever fell into the abyss of atheism, but the unfortunate experience of his youth, and especially the miserable period of his sojourn in Scotland amidst the bitter sectarianism and the complete want of charity of the Covenanters, gave him a distaste and even contempt for the formal expression of all the religious beliefs of his age. As an old chronicler asserts, “ He thought all kinds of worship and Church government as but different fashions of the same cloak.”

His mother in his early manhood, his beloved sister in his later life, strove to make him a professed member of the Roman Catholic Church; and they did not succeed. During his exile, notwithstanding the stories of his being seen at mass, he attended the French Protestant services at Charenton also—he certainly did not formally become a convert to Romanism. When his mother, Henrietta Maria, endeavoured to induce the little Duke of Gloucester to join that communion, Charles exerted his authority to the utmost to prevent any such act, and even proceeded to

¹ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 61.

² Carte, “ Ormonde,” p. 255.

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the extremity of sending the Duke of Ormonde to Paris to remove his brother from the influence of the priests and the Queen.¹

That Charles on his death-bed became reconciled to the Roman Church and received the viaticum from Father Huddleston is proved by the evidence of Bruce, Earl of Aylesbury, an eye-witness of the death of his monarch and friend, but the very fact that, immediately before his decease, it was considered necessary that such a reconciliation and reception should take place is irrefutable evidence that Charles, during his life, had not been admitted into that Church or regularly professed the tenets of that particular form of religious belief.

Stress has been laid by those who attempt to prove that this King, as well as his successor James, at heart belonged to the Roman Church, on certain papers found, after his death, in his private chest. These documents, written by his own hand, contained a formula of the Catholic religion and various reasons in defence of it. It is stated that no one but a convinced member of the Roman Church could have written and composed these arguments, but the evidence as to Charles's authorship is far from complete. Burnet declares that probably they were composed by either Bristol or D'Aubigny.² Burnet, however, is always unreliable. Ormonde thought the King only copied them, and Halifax, who probably had better opportunities of judging than all the others, is practically of the same opinion: "As to his writing these papers, he might do it . . . yet in this case [a known topic, so very often repeated] he might write it all himself and yet not one word of it his own." The question of Charles's religion, whichever way it may be decided, assuredly cannot depend on the authorship of these manuscripts.

To those who believe in a subtle relationship between mental and physical attributes the appearance of the Merrie Monarch will afford much interesting speculation.

¹ Clarendon, *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 258; Carte, "Ormonde," p. 164.

² Burnet, Vol. I., p. 396; Carte, "Ormonde," p. 255; Halifax, p. 2.

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A tall man, with an excellent figure and graceful carriage, the features of the face harsh and repellent, though lightened and relieved by brilliant eyes and a most fascinating and winning smile—such was King Charles. There is an official description of him ; all the custom-house officers and guards of ports and harbours were warned by the Council of State after the battle of Worcester : “ Have special care of that which is likewise your duty and suffer none to pass whome you may have cause to suspect to be Charles Stewart. For your better discovery take notice that he is a tall man above two yards high, his hair a deep brown near to black and has so we hear been cut off.” ¹

Many references are made by contemporary writers to Charles’s height.

“ Of tall stature and of sable hue,
Much like the son of Kish, that lofty Jew,”

is Andrew Marvell’s description of his King, while the picture is even more sharply delineated in the lines of an old lampoon, “ Popish Policies Unmasked,” published about 1679,

“ This person was a very tall black man,
Above the common size almost a span ;
His face was wasted in most piteous sort
In all things else he was of royal port.”

A curious incident in the life of Charles relative to this question of his height can be found in the diary of William Blundell, of Crosby in Lancashire.

The writer attended Charles on his home journey from Breda at the time of the Restoration. The King and his suite embarked on board the *Naseby*, an ill-omened name, immediately afterwards changed to the *Royal Charles*. Some two or three hours before his disembarkation Charles, standing under a beam in the cabin, took the measure of his own height, marking it with a notch in the wood.

Sundry tall persons walked under it ; with the true

¹ Calendar of State Papers, 1651.

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spirit of courtiers, none of them could reach it. The narrator himself then assayed, and, after making some complicated manœuvres with his thumb and the joint of his little finger placed upon his head, came to the conclusion that "I find myself five inches lower than the mark."¹

Lounging along with graceful ease the Merrie Monarch mingled freely with his subjects. His grave, harsh features softened when he spoke, and the dark saturnine face often broke into a fascinating smile as he listened to the jests of others or replied in his own witty and caustic manner.

Yet, with all the charm which natural *bonhomie* and kingly condescension might give, Charles could not be described as other than a plain man.

Riley, who, according to Walpole, "if he had had half the conceit of Sir Godfrey Kneller, could have persuaded people that he was the greatest painter in England," painted a portrait of the King; Charles came to see it. "Is it like me?" he demanded.

"Very like your Majesty," replied the painter.

"Then, odd's fish, I must be a damned ugly fellow!" was the royal rejoinder.

But handsome or ugly, the charm of manner carried all before it.

Having observed how the chilly hauteur of her husband, Charles I., estranged men from him, Henrietta Maria determined to correct the fault in her son, and so, according to Burnet, trained him in a "wonderful civility." Nature must have aided the training, for the second Charles possessed such insinuating manner, such gracious charm, that "he would send away a person better pleased at receiving nothing than those in the good King, his father's time, that had requests granted them."²

His taste agreed with his demeanour and both favourably affected his surroundings; however bad the morals of his court their manners must be irreproachable; "and now

¹ Cavaliers' Note Book.

² Aylesbury Memoirs.

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the age is more refined and much by the example of his gracious Majesty who is the pattern of courtsey.”¹

A patron of arts, a lover of fine proportions, whether architectural or feminine, Charles did much to improve the public buildings in London and to generally encourage a desire for greater comfort and amenity in the private life of his subjects. He tried, although without much success, to simplify the dress of the period and improve and correct the sartorial exuberance then in vogue.

On the occasion of his coronation he wore the first point lace collar seen in England; that usually depicted on his father, Charles I., being “point de Venise.”²

Probably the desire to change the fashion in the direction of plainer and less varied clothing arose from the knowledge that highly-coloured garments but ill assorted with his own irregular features and extraordinary darkness of complexion.

His swartness was remarkable. In an old ballad dated 23rd April, 1649, Charles I., from his coffin, upbraids the usurper Cromwell on the throne and threatens vengeance:

“ Know, caitiff, in my son, I live,
The Black Prince called by some.”

And General Monck, on one occasion before the Restoration, at a banquet “tossed off a lusty glasse of wine and drank a health to the ‘black boy.’”³

This peculiarity came to him at his birth. His mother, Henrietta Maria, shortly after the boy was born, writing to her best friend, Madame de St. George, declares: “He is so ugly I am ashamed of him, but his size and fatness supply the place of beauty. . . . I wish you could see the cavalier; he is so serious in all he does that I cannot help deeming him far wiser than myself. He is so fat and big that he is taken for a year old and he is only four months. His teeth are already beginning to come. I will send you

¹ Aubrey.

² *Ibid.*

³ Hinton, p. 28.

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his portrait as soon as he is a little fairer ; at present he is so '*noir*' I am ashamed of him." ¹

Whether or no Madame St. George received the portrait cannot now be ascertained, but many years afterwards Lady Fanshawe tells us that the King gave her husband a portrait of himself set in diamonds ; " it was a great rarity," she declares, " because there never was but one."

This fat, healthy, serious black boy arrived on a Saturday, the 29th May, 1630, the birthday of St. Augustine, we are informed, near 1 o'clock in the afternoon. He was the second child of Charles and Henrietta ; the first, Charles James, born at Greenwich on the 15th May, 1629, nearly cost his mother her life and only breathed a few hours, being baptised and buried by Dr. Laud, one of the King's chaplains.

The jolting of a long journey over the execrable roads then existent caused, as it was thought, this catastrophe, whereupon Marie de Medici sent a wheel chair to her daughter, and possibly this acceptable present may have had its effect upon the health and heartiness of the next son and heir.

But a further misfortune threatened his existence ; the "*sage femme*," Madame Peronne, who frequently assisted in bringing other royalties into the world, fell a captive to pirates, an event which prevented her exercising her skill on this occasion. However, all went well, and the robust infant was confided to the care of a wet nurse from Wales ; which fact may possibly account for those occasional lapses into abusive vernacular with which Charles is credited in after-life.

Charles, the father, and Henrietta Maria had been married five years before the birth of this dark child gave them a son and heir, thus affording an opportunity to a courtly panegyrist to declare " that Nature was five years meditating on the great piece that was the result of such a royal conflux of great and good." ²

¹ Henrietta Maria, "*Mémoires*."

² "*Eikon Basilike*," David Lloyd.

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A brilliant constellation of heavenly bodies and a shower of congratulatory addresses heralded the arrival of an heir to the throne of the three kingdoms ; Fuller, the divine, wrote in rapture concerning the notable signs which attended this birth, a new star in the heavens which appeared not only one whole day but two days after as well and an eclipse of the sun ; while David Lloyd, Master of Arts and the author of an "Eikon Basilike," to maintain the dignity of his plagiarised title, solemnly declared that "while vulgar births are passed by every day as unobserved, the whole frame of Nature takes notice of sovereign births."

However, Lilley, the calendar maker, whose Puritan tendencies and knowledge of astronomy caused him to be less susceptible to popular superstition, held the opinion "that though many supposed there had been a new star, it is the planet Venus which is usually seen in the day time."

Presuming Lilley's assertion is correct, subsequent events showed a marked degree of appropriateness in the appearance of this planet at the birth of Charles II.

Laud, Bishop of London, baptised the child, Abbot, the Archbishop of Canterbury, being prevented doing so by the unhappy accident of shooting a man, he having killed a gamekeeper in mistake for a buck.¹ Louis XIII., King of France (the uncle), Frederick, King of Bohemia, and the Prince Elector of Palatine acted as godfathers, while Marie de Medici stood as godmother, the greatest state and ceremony attending the function, the Duchess of Richmond, who acted as proxy, driving in the Queen's carriage attended by a numerous retinue of lords, knights, gentlemen, footmen "women and gentlewomen" clad in white satin garnished with crimson and crimson silk stockings.

A certain degree of dissatisfaction, however, existed among the Puritans ; for years their hope lay in the fact that Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, in default of male heirs, inherited the crown of Great Britain ; "For God had already provided better for us in giving the Queen of Bohemia such a hopeful progeny brought up in the reformed religion,

¹ Eggesfield.

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whereas the King's children being brought up under a mother of the Romish persuasion it was uncertain what religion they would follow";¹ thus argued members of the Puritan party, and they showed their regret at that which had taken place by refraining from participation in the general rejoicing, "neither man nor child nor wood nor refreshment" coming from their houses, which they shut "all the evening as in a time of mourning and disconsolation."

These fears and disappointment, instead of diminishing, increased when the tidings became known that the King, with that curious want of tact so marked in his character, had appointed Lady Roxburgh, a devout Roman Catholic, as governess to the youthful prince, thus confirming the doubt as to the religion in which the child would be brought up. But better counsels prevailed; instead of the obnoxious Papist a pronounced Protestant was substituted in the person of Lady Dorset; "he was committed in his infancy to the indulgent care and pious tuition of the Countess of Dorset, and when his growing parts rendered him too masculine for a feminine conduct he was delivered to the Earl of Newcastle."²

When journeying to Scotland on the occasion of their coronation Charles I. and his Queen were entertained by William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle, in such a sumptuous and magnificent manner as to call from the thrifty Hyde an expression of thanks that "though possibly it might too much whet the appetite of others to excess no man can ever after in these days imitate it."

It is probable that this princely hospitality suggested to their Majesties that no more fitting governor to the heir apparent could be found than their noble host, for in addition to distinguished rank and great wealth the Earl of Newcastle bore a high character as an accomplished and stately gentleman. There is every reason to believe that during the period this nobleman controlled the prince's

¹ Carte, IV., p. 209.

² Aurelian Cook.

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education the boy learnt all things necessary for his future condition, for if he had implicitly followed a letter of instruction which his governor sent him relative to his studies, conduct and behaviour, he would have been a very perfect gentleman.

“For your education, Sir, it is fit you should have some languages, though I confess I would rather have you study things than words, matter than language.”

This last precept Charles at least obeyed, for he became an excellent judge of men.

“What you read I would have it history, the best chosen history . . . and thus you shall see the excellencies and errors of kings and subjects.”

This admonition might have proved of greater value had not the irony of fate afforded practical example to Charles, more impressive than that contained in the most weighty historical tome ever written.

“I would not have you too studious”; this probably commended itself to the youthful prince as a piece of advice worthy of obedience; “Be courteous and civil to everybody . . . believe it the putting off your hatt and making a leg pleases more than reward or preservation so such doth it take all kinds of people.”¹

These precepts must have struck a responsive chord in Charles's heart, for certainly he practised them to the utmost, greatly to the advantage of his popularity. The Bishop of Chichester, Brian Duppa, also took part in the education of the young prince, and his sweetness of disposition, kindly nature and gentle bearing, qualities eulogised by every writer of the period, succeeded in gaining the respect and affection of his pupil. Many years after, when King of England, as Anthony à Wood relates, Charles, hearing that his old tutor lay at Richmond on his death-bed, rode out to see him, and, kneeling by the bedside with tears, craved a blessing from the dying man.

But few incidents of Charles's infancy are recorded. A writer of one of the Secret Histories, however, declares that

¹ Ellis's Letters.

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when very young he showed a strange and unaccountable fondness for a wooden billet, without which in his arms he would never go abroad or lie down in his bed.

Charles is not the first little child who carried some inanimate object to bed and derived companionship from it ; probably the author of this specially scurrilous libel introduced the incident to afford himself the opportunity of further remarking that from this peculiarity the British people could judge that the prince when he came to years of maturity chose either "oppressors or blockheads" for his favourite friends, or that he himself wished to be like Jupiter's log for everybody to deride or contemn.¹

A really serious accident occurred to the boy in his ninth year when he broke his arm and afterwards became very sickly, falling first into a fever, then to a jaundice, subsequently catching the measles ; in fact being subject to a serious round of infantile diseases.

The last ailment may possibly account for an interesting letter which he received from his mother, reputed to be the first she had written in English :

"Charles, j am sore that I most begin my first letter with chiding you because I heere that you will not take phisike. I hope it was onlei for this day and that to-morrowe, you will doe it, for yf you will not j must come to you and make you take it, for it is for your healthe. j have given an order to my lord Newcastell to send mi worde tonight whether you will or not, therefore j hope you will not give mi the paines to goe and so j rest

"Your affectionat mother,

"HENRIETTA MARIE, R.

"TO MY DEARE SONE THE PRINCE." ²

There is almost a threat of stronger measures to come should Charles have proved refractory ; possibly Henrietta Maria had recollections of the drastic methods employed on herself and her brother Louis when, in their youth, they trembled under the Draconic rule of Madame de Montglat,

¹ "Secret History," 1690.

² Ellis' Letters, First Series.

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and the wretched Dauphin, time after time, refused to take the dreaded "médecine noire" even when mitigated by "un lait d'amande" until forced to do so by corporal chastisement. If the "phisike" prescribed for my "deare Sone the Prince" in any way resembled the black draught prepared for his uncle, Louis the Just, by the celebrated French physician Héroard, we can well understand his disinclination to swallow the nauseous mixture.

1 once de casse infuse (gomme purgatif).

2 drachmes de séné.

4 scupules de rhubarbe.

$\frac{1}{2}$ once de sirop de limon.

„ de decoction de chicorée blanch.

„ ozeille (sorrel).

„ buglosse.

„ agrimoine (liverwort).

„ raisin de Corinthe (dry currants).

„ linnierès de fenouil.

„ de citron et un peu de conserve de violette.

Truly this is what the Lord Protector would have called a Godly Purge.

Even in his early days Charles seems to have possessed that faculty of good-humoured wit which stood him in such excellent stead on many occasions.

It must have been the infliction of some such medicinal compound as the above which called forth the following letter to his governor, written in a large boyish hand, between lines ruled in pencil above and below.

"MY LORD,

"I would not have you take too much phisicke for it doth all waies make me worse and I think it will do the like with you. I ride every day and I am ready to follow any other direction from you. Make hast to return to him that loves you."

"CHARLES, P.

"TO MY LORD NEWCASTLE."

Unfortunately for Charles, who evidently loved him, Lord Newcastle after three years resigned his charge for



THE CHILDREN OF CHARLES I.
After the Painting by Van Dyck.

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fear, as Clarendon puts it, that the "insupportable envy" occasioned by the office might work detriment to the King's cause and to himself.

He was succeeded by William Seymour, Marquis of Hertford, another great peer, whose age unfitted him for activity and fatigue as he was "so wedded to his ease as to love his book above all exercises, and had even contracted such a laziness of mind that he had no delight in conversation and cared not to discourse or argue points."¹ With these qualifications his fitness to supervise the education of a young, lively and mercurial prince is hard to discover.

In truth Charles all his life suffered from bad and insufficient education, not only as regards scholastic learning—even that seems to have been neglected—but in those far more important matters of self-control, mental and physical discipline.

Shortly after his birth the titles of Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester were conferred on him; at the age of eight he received knighthood, and in his eleventh year he performed a political act which may, for all that is known, have left its influence on his after-life. The King, his father, sent him with a message requesting the House of Lords to forbear, or at least delay, the sentence about to be passed on Lord Strafford. There is a pathetic touch in this incident, the despotic monarch, torn to the heart, as we now know, at being obliged to forsake the man who endeavoured and wished to serve him at all hazards, sending his eldest son to make a final appeal to the judges "that they might know how much he concerned himself in that affair, seeing that he employed about it him that was dearest to him among them, his first born."²

On the departure of the Queen to Holland, King Charles commanded the prince and his governor, Lord Hertford, to join him at Greenwich. A peremptory order from the Parliament forbade the journey, but Hertford, preferring to

¹ Clarendon, "History of the Rebellion," Vol. I., p. 603 (Oxford Edition, 1849).

² New "Eikon Basilike."

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obey his monarch, successfully carried off the boy from Hampton Court and joined his father.

Although, perhaps, there is a certain amount of partisan feeling in the remark of the chronicler that, in sending this command, Parliament bore in mind the saying "Here is the heir, come let us kill him, enter in and take possession," yet the condition of affairs between the King and the Parliament now had arrived at a period of such friction as well might induce Charles to keep his successor to the throne under his own supervision and control; consequently during the whole of the troublous time which ensued Charles the king and Charles the prince remained much in each other's company.

Again a change of governors became necessary, as Lord Hertford departed for the West of England, where he possessed much influence, to raise troops for the royal cause, and again the same ill-fortune attended the choice.

Clarendon relates that the King and Queen wished the Earl of Leicester to undertake the important task, but, as circumstances prevented the appointment, it was conferred on the Earl of Berkshire, a nobleman of no attainments or fitting qualifications, who obtained the post chiefly because "he had a mind to it and his importunity was very troublesome."¹

During the stay of the King in the north, when day by day it became more apparent that the issue between himself and his Parliament could not be decided except by force of arms, he founded for his own protection a body of guards, consisting of one regiment of foot, about 600 in number, and a troop of horse, the command of which he gave to the Prince of Wales. Both Charles and his brother James attended their father at the raising of the Royal Standard at Nottingham and the subsequent military operations, being present at the indecisive battle of Keinton or Edgehill, where they ran a serious risk of death or capture.

They were entrusted on that occasion to the custody of Dr. Harvey, celebrated as the discoverer of the circulation

¹ Clarendon, "History of Rebellion," Vol. III., p. 270.

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of the blood. However unsuited Lord Hertford or Lord Berkshire may have been for the task of controlling the young princes, Dr. Harvey, if current accounts of him are to be believed, possessed even less capability. "He was always very contemplative. He made dissections of frogges, toads, and other animals and made curious observations on them. He was at the fight at Edgehill, and during the fight the prince and Duke of York were committed to his care. He told me that he withdrew with them under a hedge and took out of his pocket a book and read, but he had not read long before a bullet from a great gun grazed the ground near him which made him remove his station."¹

This contemplative guardian of the Prince of Wales exposed his charge to even more serious perils. The King's infantry having retreated, a body of the enemy's cavalry came towards the place where the two boys were stationed. Sir John Hinton, one of the King's physicians, seeing the risk which threatened the heir apparent, rode up and "with all earnestness most humbly but at last somewhat rudely importuned" the boys to retire also and so avoid the danger of being killed or taken prisoners.

If the narrator is to be believed, Charles replied that he feared them not, and, drawing a "pistoll out of one of his holsters and spanning it," resolved to charge the enemy himself.

Happily wiser counsels prevailed; but one of the opposing force, mounted and armed *cap-à-pie*, came to such close quarters that had not Hinton received the shock of the charge, dismounted him, and, with the aid of a gentleman pensioner named Mathews, who, being armed with a pole-axe, "immediately decided the business," serious consequences might have ensued and the course of succession to the throne terminated.²

Clarendon, although he does not give so much detail, states that if the enemies' horse "had bestirred themselves they might with little difficulty have destroyed or taken

¹ Aubrey.

² Hinton, "Memoirs."

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prisoner the King himself and his two sons, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York."

However lax may have been the discipline young Charles experienced from the governors appointed to control and educate him, the reverse was the case when he found himself in the company of his royal father. Bishop Morley relates: "The old King was always very severe in the education of his present Majesty, in so much that at St. Mary's, at Oxford, he did and hitt him on the head with his staffe when he did observe him to laugh (at sermon time) upon the ladys who sat against him."¹ It is to be feared that this correction had no lasting effect, for to his dying day Charles II. indulged during sermon time in the same conduct as brought down, literally on his head, his father's wrath.

When after Edgehill the march to London proved abortive, when action succeeded action without any real advantage to the cause, and finally when the disastrous battle of Marston Moor lost to the King the North of England, his melancholy and depression became so pronounced as to be apparent to all his court.

Parliament had assumed the custody of his three younger children, and the thoughts to which this measure gave rise, together with the growing exigencies of his own position, caused him to ponder as to the wisdom of retaining his eldest son always near his person.

"He began to say that himself and the prince were too much to venture in one bottom, and that it was now time to unboy him by putting him into some action and business out of his sight."² Further consideration tended to strengthen this purpose, so, early in 1645, the King decided that the young prince should journey to the West of England, and that a Council should be appointed to consult with him on matters connected with his journey and household. The Duke of Richmond, the Earl of Southampton, Lord Capel, Lord Hopton, Lord Colepepper and Sir Edward Hyde, afterwards Lord Clarendon, the Chancellor of the Exchequer,

¹ Lake's "Memoirs."

² Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. III., p. 465.

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formed this Council and the King found himself obliged, of necessity, to include the Earl of Berkshire, the prince's governor, although for that capacity this nobleman had shown no fitness and his pupil held him in very small esteem.

If at the commencement of his career Charles II. had fallen under the influence of wise and liberal minds, if the councillors appointed to shape and direct his budding qualities had been men who could not only have controlled but, by their example, have stimulated to high and worthy actions this boy, newly invested with great and responsible functions, the history of the Stuart dynasty might have been different. Some few years later Baillie, the covenanting divine, wrote with evident sincerity: "If God could send him among us without some of his present councillors I think he might make with God's blessing as good a king as Britain saw this 100 years."¹

When the Scotch minister wrote these words the Council certainly contained other advisers than those first nominated to assist Charles, but the opinion would have been equally true six years earlier, for able administrators, loyal subjects as one or two of the councillors proved, their differences of opinion and diversity of aim not only neutralised their influence, but also created in Charles an impression, afterwards intensified, that ministers and councillors solely worked for their own ends, and the wise King used them so far as might be agreeable to his own convenience.

Before starting for Bristol, the King deciding that this city should be his son's headquarters, the rank of generalissimo of all the royal forces was conferred on the young Charles, a title chosen at the suggestion of Rupert, who declared that there should be no general in England but the Prince of Wales, and that he himself would accept a commission from no person of less rank.

On Wednesday, 5th March, 1645, the two, Charles the father and Charles the son, parted never to meet again on earth.

The prince lodged that night at Farrington, having made

¹ Baillie's Correspondence, p. 335.

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the journey thither in a continued storm of rain from the moment he left Oxford.

By way of Devizes and Bath the journey was made to Bristol, where Charles gained his first experience of the conditions under which circumstances compelled him to live for the next five years.

No suitable preparations for his establishment had been made ; not a man or a horse were provided, and, worst of all, the subsidy of £100 a week for the support of himself and his followers was not forthcoming.

Now, as for many a long day afterwards, the pinch of necessity forced him to borrow money, this time "from the Lord Hopton's store to buy bread." From the commencement of his sojourn in the west until the day he left his father's dominions failure, defeat and misfortune never ceased to attend him.¹

"There was only one man in the Council of whom nobody spoke ill, and that was Lord Hopton," writes Clarendon : the rest of his advisers quarrelled ; his generals, when sober, refused to co-operate with each other, and Charles himself fell for a time under one of those bad influences to which, all his life, he was only too prone.

In his infancy a Mrs. Wyndham, wife of the Governor of Bridgwater, filled the position of nurse. According to Clarendon's description she possessed none of the attributes of a gentlewoman, and the King, fearful that his son might again fall under her unwholesome influence, commanded that the prince should not take up his abode farther west than Bristol.

The growing unhealthiness of that city and the inactivity of the Royalist troops around Taunton compelled the prince and his court, for the purpose of avoiding the one and encouraging the others, to move in the direction of the latter place.

Charles fixed on Bridgwater, and arranged there a meeting place for the commission of Somerset and Dorset.

A silly and vulgar woman, yet with a strong tincture of

¹ Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. IV., p. 12.

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self-interest, this Mrs. Wyndham took full advantage of the occasion. She recalled continually the old relationship, caressed the prince in public, and lost no opportunity of showing her intimacy with royalty. She solicited many material favours for her husband, her family and herself, and, when she found the grants could only be ratified by the authority of the Council, set herself to create a faction and raise jealousies in that body, already too much given to intrigues and divisions. The prince, probably on the advice of Hyde, assumed a habit of regular attendance at the meetings of the Council, so as to accustom himself to business and gain facility in the expression of his thoughts and the power of forming a judgment upon affairs of importance.

The foolish woman not only persuaded him to discontinue this practice, but systematically derided his councillors and, so Clarendon asserts, made disparaging remarks concerning the King, his father, all the while parading her increased familiarity with the prince.

Whether these liberties comprised the extent of her wrong-doing it is difficult to say; an innuendo of something worse appears to flavour Clarendon's narration, especially his description "*nihil muliebri præter corpus gerens*"; moreover, it is plain that under all circumstances both the acquaintance and the influence were undesirable. Pepys many years afterwards declares, probably from hearsay, "Mrs. Wyndham ruled the present King like a Minister of State."¹

To avoid further mischief the Council determined to return to Bristol, but in a month's time the plague increased to such an extent in that city as to necessitate a further removal, so since the differences between the military commanders still continued—their petty jealousies and selfish disputes had already obliged Hyde, Capel and Colepepper to journey to Exeter—a decision was taken to fix the prince's residence also farther west.

Barnstaple, "a very fine swete town as ever I saw," such is Hyde's description of the place, became for a time

¹ Pepys, 3rd December, 1665; Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. IV., p. 23.

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Charles's abode, much to his satisfaction, and he lingered there whilst the Royal cause waned all over England, Naseby's fight putting fresh life into the heart of the Round-heads and damping the spirits of the Cavaliers.

Goring, as much feared by friends as foes, after wasting a month in dilatory operations, met with a crushing defeat from Sir Thomas Fairfax at Lamport, which drove him back in the direction of North Devon, whence the prince some three weeks before had journeyed to Launceston, a place sufficiently fortified to provide a safe harbourage. The local gentry assembled to pay their duty to their royal guest and made proffers of assistance. "They were generally loyal to the Crown and hospitable to their neighbours, but are of a crafty and censorious nature, as most are so far from London."¹ Whether or no Lady Fanshawe's criticism on the West Country notabilities was deserved, certainly but little real aid could be obtained from them, and on every side the situation of affairs darkened.

Here, by the hand of Lord Colepepper, Charles received a letter from his unfortunate father :

" CHARLES,

" It is very fit now for me to prepare for the worst in order to which I spoke to Colepepper this morning concerning you, judging it fit to give it you under my hand that you may give the readier obedience to it. Wherefore know that my pleasure, whensoever you find yourself in apparent danger of falling into the Rebels' hands, that you convey yourself into France and there to be under your mother's care, who is to have the absolute full power of your education in all things except religion, and in that not to meddle at all but leave it entirely to the care of your tutor, the Bishop of Salisbury, or to whom he shall appoint to supply his place in time of his necessitated absence. . . .

" Your loving father,

" CHARLES, R." ²

At young Charles's request Colepepper only consulted Capel, Hopton, and Hyde, who after much deliberation

¹ " Fanshawe Memoirs."

² Clarendon, " Rebellion," Vol. IV., p. 83.

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despatched a letter in cipher explaining their strong objection to making France the place of asylum for the prince. At the same time Hyde took steps to provide a vessel suitably provisioned, to transport the little court where-soever might be deemed advisable ; for day by day it became more certain that the Royalist cause was doomed.

The final blow fell in the surrender of Bristol by Rupert, for reasons, as treachery is unthinkable, which it is almost impossible to understand.

After this " new earthquake in all the little quarters the King had left " again a letter from that unhappy monarch arrived directing Lord Colepepper, in almost the same words as in the previous epistle, to convey the prince to France ;¹ again the Council, though in great doubts, deferred taking a course they feared would be fatal to all the Royalist hopes.

From Launceston in a hurried dash to Exeter, back again and then to Liskeard, from Liskeard to Truro, rode the young Charles and his Council. The enemy now succeeded in gaining the greater part of Devon, and on Christmas Day Charles received the third communication from his father bidding him not delay too long, but to fly to Denmark if possible, but under no circumstances to Scotland or Ireland.²

In bitter winter weather the prince left Truro for Bodmin, his councillors still being very dubious of the wisdom of the King's command, but, the enemy advancing once more, early in January, 1646, the unfortunate boy retreated to Launceston.

The complete rout of the remaining Royalist forces under Lord Hopton, on 15th February, at Torrington, destroyed the sole hope that remained to the failing cause, and the prince with his followers made a hurried journey to Pen-dennis, in the hopes, as Hyde said, of living in and defending it against the world.

This sanguine expectation depended entirely upon succour

¹ Clarendon, " Rebellion," Vol. IV., p. 103.

² *Ibid.*, p. 118.

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arriving speedily from France, Lord Jermyn asserting that 5,000 French foot under the Protestant Ruvigny would be landed in Cornwall within a month. But no troops started on the expedition or attempted to start, the only foundation for Jermyn's promise being some casual remark he heard fall from the lips of Cardinal Mazarin.

The complete hopelessness of the situation now manifested itself fully to the Council, which, after much discussion, resolved that the prince should seek shelter in Scilly, as still forming part of the King's dominions.

On Monday, the 2nd March, at 10 o'clock at night, young Charles and all his suite embarked on board the *Phoenix*, and after two days' sail arrived, on Wednesday, at St. Mary's, the principal island of the group. Lady Fanshawe in her reminiscences has given a picture of the misery the party endured. Robbed and despoiled by the crew of the vessel in which she embarked, they broke open her trunks and stole £60 in money and property worth £300, extremely sick from the voyage, the unfortunate lady obtained quarters not far from the castle where the prince lay. Retiring immediately to bed, "which was so vile my footman ever lay in a better," in an atmosphere tainted with dried fish, she woke at night chilled with cold to discover at daylight that the bed "was near swimming in the sea, which the owner told us it never did do so but at spring tide." Neither food nor clothing could be found in the whole island sufficient to last the court for a month; "truly we begged our bread of God, for we thought every meal our last."

Whilst living in these depressed circumstances a message "written in a loving and tender way"¹ arrived from the Parliament to Prince Charles, inviting him to come "forthwith into their quarters and to reside in such a place and with such Council and attendants about you as the two Houses shall appoint." To this invitation, reminiscent of the nursery rhyme of the spider and the fly, Charles returned an answer savouring strongly of Hyde's wisdom: "We have a great and an earnest desire to be among you if we thought

¹ Whitelocke.

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it might be an expedient towards a blessed peace and the composing of these miserable distractions"; he further adds that he is going to Jersey, which is part of the dominions of his royal father and sufficiently near to enable him to "the better receive advice from you with which we shall always comply as far as with our duty and piety we may."

To emphasise the loving and tender character of their message, on Sunday, the 12th April, the Parliamentary fleet of twenty-seven or twenty-eight sail surrounded the island, but hardly arrived before a "very notable tempest which lasted two days totally dispersed them."

The wisdom of availing themselves of an opportunity of leaving the island so manifestly unfit, in all respects, as a place of refuge appealed to the Council, the only objection to such a proceeding being the fear whether the King's cause might be prejudiced thereby.

But when the debate opened on the matter, Charles produced a letter from his father written shortly after Naseby, one of the most pathetic of the many sad communications which this most sorrow stricken of monarchs wrote to his family :

"CHARLES,

"My late misfortunes remember me to command you that which I hope you shall never have occasion to obey, it is this ; if I should at any time be taken prisoner by the Rebels, I command you upon my blessing never to yield upon any conditions that are dishonourable, unsafe for your person or derogatory to regal authority upon any consideration whatsoever though it were for the saving of my life." [After further exhorting his son to constancy and courage, he concludes :] "I charge you to keep the letter still safe by you until you shall have cause to use it and then and not till then show it to all your Council, it being my command to them as well as you whom I pray God to make as prosperously glorious as any of the predecessors ever were.

"Your loving father,

"C., R." 1

The prince had concealed this letter from the time of

¹ Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. IV., p. 184.

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receiving it, "which truly, I think, was the only secret he ever kept from the four he trusted," says Hyde, evidently piqued at the boy's reticence; but this revelation of the King's forebodings impressed so forcibly the minds of all who heard it that the Council, the egregious Berkshire alone dissenting, determined, now that the coasts were clear to sail at once for Jersey.

A frigate of 160 tons mounting twenty-four guns, named the *Proud Black Eagle*, commanded by Captain Baldwin Wake, carried the whole party quickly across to the island, where they landed on Friday, the 17th April, without sighting any of the enemies' sail, and so, for a time at least, found a refuge which afforded both the prince and his followers safety and protection until they could formulate plans for the future.

Thus closed the first period in the life of Charles, a space of years which beginning with the regal splendour of his birth ended with his flight, a penniless refugee, to the farthest limits of his father's dominions.

The diverse episodes he had encountered, the varied characters of the men by whom he had been surrounded, without doubt moulded and influenced his character. From all sources it is plainly shown that he possessed qualities which if wisely directed and healthily encouraged might have added lustre to his name and age. Unfortunately at the very period when careful and continuous guidance by those whom he could love and respect was absolutely essential, he became subject to circumstances which would have strained the noblest nature, and directed by men who, whatever may have been their other attributes, were in no way fitted to gain the affection and confidence of a high-spirited, mercurial and virile youth.

Most of the councillors who attended Charles after his separation from his father filled military or administrative posts, and were constantly occupied with matters in which, by his father's express commands, he was forbidden to interfere. While others fought and strove, he, whose nature

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demanding exercise and activity, remained unemployed and aloof. It is true that he is supposed to have attended the Council meetings, but it is not conceivable that at this time of national crisis the opinions of a boy of fifteen years old had any weight with the responsible men, treble his age, over whom he nominally presided.

No one appears to have attempted to train the boy, none strove to form and direct his manifest abilities. Hyde might have done so, but from Charles's own testimony we know that Hyde treated him as a schoolmaster treats a pupil, not as a councillor treats a prince, and yet Hyde, who, by his wisdom and restraint, rendered inestimable service to the Royalist cause and mainly contributed to the Restoration, should have been the man of all others to have gained power and influence over the lad in his early and most impressionable age. But Nature forbade. Charles loved the sea : Hyde required three days on shore to recover from the effects of three hours afloat. Charles, like most boys, hated writing : Hyde "loved letters better than venison," so Ormonde told him. Charles delighted in motion, excitement and activity : Hyde, too old for such pursuits, could only urge repose and peace, whilst sighing at the physical exertion his charge entailed upon him. The Chancellor did his best—the best can do no more ; but if instead of a middle-aged lawyer there could have been found a companion and councillor whose spirit would have encouraged, whose nobility exalted, and example improved the impressionable character of the boy at the time of youth when his nature formed and expanded, the undoubted talents of Charles might have been strengthened, his physical frailties repressed, and the history of the Stuarts found a different termination.

CHAPTER II.

CHARLES : THE COVENANT AND THE CHURCHES.

ALTHOUGH Jersey afforded an asylum for the heir apparent safe at least for a time from the attacks of the Parliamentary forces, and one which was in no way distasteful to the young prince, who there found amusement as well as refuge, yet to such a watchful and far-seeing statesman as Hyde it was evident that the sojourn of Charles and his little court in that remote corner of the kingdom could not be more than temporary.

For many months the problem had ever been present to the Council, which would be the wisest course for the Prince of Wales to pursue ?—to cast in his lot with the chivalrous Ormondé in Ireland ; to trust himself to the tender mercies of the Scottish Covenanters ; or to join his mother, the Queen, in Paris ?

Hyde, a firm friend to Ormonde, for whom he entertained the highest respect, infinitely preferred the first of these alternatives, for he disliked, with a persistency which almost amounted to hatred, the Scottish leaders and their followers ; while his deep attachment to the English Church caused him to entertain a great aversion to any proceedings which would place the heir to the throne under the influence of his mother, a professed and ardent Roman Catholic.

But Henrietta Maria, whose advice always bore great weight in the councils of her husband, did not intend to yield up control over her son without a struggle.

She made many attempts to induce the boy to come to Paris, and now that, practically, he was an exile from his father's dominions she thought that the occasion afforded an excellent opportunity of obtaining her desire, and accord-

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ingly sent an urgent message to Charles commanding him to leave Jersey and forthwith join her in Paris.

Hyde, and those on the Council who agreed with him, strove earnestly to combat the maternal injunction. With cogent reasoning the Chancellor urged that it must be "the resurrection of English courage and loyalty which would recover England to the King, and that no foreign aid, except arms and money, would ever reconcile their hearts and affections to the King, without which he had no hope of reigning."¹

Lord Capel and Lord Colepepper departed for Paris to lay before the Queen the many reasons which rendered it inadvisable for the Prince of Wales to place himself in the power of the French court, and Hyde tried every effort, both with Charles himself and with the Council, to bring about a decision that if a departure were to be made from Jersey it should be in the direction of Ireland, and not France.

After the starting of these emissaries Lord Digby, who had lately joined the court of Charles, with characteristic impetuosity—he was the owner of "a pregnant fancy"—advised Hyde to adopt less dilatory and more drastic measures, to effect the absolute realisation of his desires by kidnapping Charles, placing him on board one of the vessels in the harbour, and transporting him, willy nilly, direct to Ireland.²

Such forcible conduct in no way appealed to the cautious Chancellor, who still continued his correspondence and his arguments, while the volatile Digby hurried off to France, intent on converting the Queen Mother to his own point of view.

So far from this being the case the reverse occurred. The reiterated desire of Henrietta Maria and the wily arguments of Mazarin completely persuaded the unstable Digby, who in company with Lord Jermyn and the two peers, Capel and Colepepper, sent from the prince's Council,

¹ Clarendon, *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 307.

² Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. IV., p. 193.

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returned to Jersey intent on inducing Charles to obey his mother's injunctions and at once join her in Paris.

Charles, a boy of sixteen, welcomed the project of a visit to France and emancipation from the "tutorly" rule of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; in the highest spirits he accepted Jermyn's proposal and made preparations for departure, hailing with delight the prospect of another voyage, his love for the sea and all that sailed on it being a very marked trait in his character.

For a time bad weather delayed the start; at length the wind blew from the right quarter, so Jermyn and Digby, regardless of remonstrances, and not heeding the gloomy looks of Hyde, Capel and Hopton, gave the orders for sailing, and, each taking an arm of the young prince, led him, nothing loth, down to the quay, where a frigate lay at anchor.

The old chronicler who, in his quaint French, records these doings expresses his delight at the affectionate demeanour of these two courtiers: "Milord Jermyn le menoit d'un coté par sous le bras et Milord Digby le menoit d'l'autre, lequel le conduisèrent de cette façon jusqu'a l'embarquage de sa petite Patache."¹ He evidently did not realise that the attentions were bestowed for fear that, even on the eve of embarkation, the advice of Hyde, Capel and Hopton, who refused to accompany the prince to France, might cause him to reconsider his determination.

A sudden storm compelled Charles to delay, but taking advantage of a lull in the weather he at once set off in his own "shalley," a beautiful vessel presented to him by the loyal inhabitants of the island. The wind again rising obliged the adventurous boy to seek the shelter of the larger vessel, and eventually the whole party landed safely at Cotainville in France.²

Owing to their straitened pecuniary circumstances difficulty in obtaining post-horses caused some delay, yet at length, on the 10th July, Charles and his party reached Paris, and, after many years, the young prince joined his mother.

¹ Chevalier. Hoskyns, "Charles II. in the Channel Islands," Vol. I., p. 445.

² Clarendon, Calendar of Papers in Bodleian Library, p. 323.

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It was no gay or festive household which now received Charles : the French court, harassed by the rebellion of the Fronde, itself suffered from impecuniosity, and consequently spared but a meagre pittance to Henrietta Maria, daughter of France though she might be ; but due preparations were made for the ceremonious reception of the heir to the throne of Great Britain, and, after two months' searching of precedents and abstruse discussions concerning the appropriate etiquette, the young King, Louis Quatorze, received his cousin with solemn state. "The prince has been at Fontainebleau and truly received as civilly and with as much respect as could be, being met two leagues on the way by the King and the Queen Regent, they all alighting and saluting, then taken into the Queen Regent's coach, the prince sitting on the right hand the same side as the King. Truly the prince has behaved himself so handsomely that he has gotten the love of all that have seen him, both men and women." ¹

Though this reception placed Charles in his suitable position at the French court and accorded to him his legitimate rank and precedence, ² yet it did little towards supplying the more material needs of lodging, food and apparel, to say nothing of surplus funds for providing amusement and maintaining a fitting social position. Notwithstanding the utmost care and economy, the English Queen and her household felt, at times, the pinch of actual poverty ; with true maternal instincts she turned towards the remedy for such circumstances, which invariably first appeals to the feminine mind, a rich marriage for her son.

The scheme commended itself all the more to her as a suitable heiress at that time occupied a prominent place at the French court. Mademoiselle de Montpensier, La Grande Mademoiselle, rich, beautiful, in her own estimation, high in rank and ambition, formed in every way a "*parti*" worthy of a future King of England, especially as she owned much property *in præsenti*, whereas the young prince possessed absolutely nothing except *in futuro*.

¹ Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. II., p. 255.

² "Memoires de Madame de Motteville," Vol. II., p. 292.

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La Grande Mademoiselle, following the prevalent fashion of the times, kept a diary, in which she circumstantially relates the admiration which "ma belle taille, ma bonne mien, ma blancheur et l'éclat de mes cheveux blonds" excited in all who were permitted to enjoy the sight.¹

A young lady who could analyse her own attractions so dispassionately was also capable of accurately appraising her own matrimonial value; small chance therefore for a tall, somewhat raw-boned youth, who although he possessed "beaux yeux noirs," which assuredly sparkled with appreciation of the charms so lavishly displayed, "la tête belle, les cheveux noirs le teint brun et passable agréable de sa personne," in no way could be called handsome and, as yet, showed but little skill in the art of polite love-making. Moreover, as he could not speak one word of French he was, perforce, obliged to do his courting in dumb show or by the vicarious assistance of an interpreter, which somewhat detracted from the subtlety of the romantic situation.

According to La Grande Mademoiselle, Henrietta Maria set her heart upon the match. "The Queen of England was very anxious to persuade me that he (her son) was in love with me; he came into my room at all hours and found me much to his taste."² But Charles, although in obedience to his mother he dutifully paid attention to Mademoiselle de Montpensier, yet made but small advance in gaining her affection.

It would have been better for his future if he had been equally unsuccessful in attaining to a knowledge of the other fascinating attractions to be found in Paris.

From the moment of his arrival his mother and her satellite, Lord Jermyn, assumed complete control over the lad and "exercised it with that strictness that although his Highness was above the age of eighteen, he never put on his hat before the Queen nor was it desired he should meddle in any business or be sensible of the unhappy condition the royal family was in."³

¹ "Memoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier."

² *Ibid.*

³ Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. IV., p. 343.

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He never had ten pistoles in his pocket, and although in Jersey he mingled freely among his fellow-countrymen, yet in Paris "the English were kept at a great distance, but the French were as familiar with him as could be imagined."¹

A modicum of education, it is true, was bestowed upon him. "The prince gives good Doctor Earle, who is a most worthy man, leave to read to him an hour in a day and Mr. Hobbes will teach him the mathematics another. What progress he makes I know not, but without doubt he hath a sweetness of nature not easy to be corrupted."² Inadequate as this scholastic training must have been, on other subjects equally if not more important for a coming monarch, a knowledge of the political problem then existent, the wants and desires of his future subjects, the plan and scheme necessary for maintaining his own interests and those of his race, this boy, the hope of a great cause, by the jealousy and negligence of his mother was kept absolutely ignorant.

Penniless and deprived of all the suitable accessories of his rank, those of his fellow-subjects who lived in France chose to keep apart from the exiled court rather than take their commands from a favourite or consult with a prince who seemed in no way prepared to maintain his legitimate position. "Nor was this economy well liked even in France, nor the prince himself so much respected as he would have been had he lived more like himself and appeared more concerned in his own business."³

Full of life and energy, under no discipline, with no regular pursuits, Charles, like most young men, fell into bad company, and experienced less difficulty in doing so as two men notoriously vicious and intemperate, the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Percy, were closely connected with the court of Henrietta Maria and thus in constant communication with Charles himself. To Buckingham's example and instruction may be attributed much of the looseness of living which sullied the career of Charles II. "He who was

¹ Clarendon, *State Papers*, Vol. II., p. 277.

² *Ibid.*, p. 319.

³ Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. IV., p. 343.

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then got into all the impieties and vices of the age set himself to corrupt the King, in which he was too successful, being seconded in the wicked design by Lord Percy.”¹

Although all of Burnet's statements must be received with caution, there can be but little doubt that no worse companion for a young man, heir apparent to a throne, could be found than the brilliant profligate George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham.

For two years this deplorable state of affairs continued ; then circumstances arose which afforded an opportunity for Charles to live in a purer and more bracing atmosphere. During the stay in Jersey negotiations began between the young prince and the Scotch Covenanters ; the extreme intolerance of these fanatics on the one hand and the dogmatic obstinacy of Hyde on the other prevented the attempts ripening into any concrete arrangement. The Scots insisted on the prince signing the Solemn League and Covenant, while Hyde demanded the concession that the use of the English Liturgy should be permitted in the Royal household ; consequently only greater bitterness resulted between the parties : but Charles, hearing that the Duke of Hamilton, having raised considerable forces, intended to march to the assistance of the imprisoned King of England, at once announced his intention of participating in the attempt to rescue his father.²

By strenuous efforts, assisted in some measure by Lord Jermyn, he raised sufficient funds to pay for the journey, left Paris, and hastened towards the coast with the intention of sailing for Scotland. On his way northward the intelligence arrived that a portion of the English fleet had revolted against Cromwell's dictatorship, put on shore their commander, Rainborough, and all officers who favoured the Commonwealth, and now lay off the Dutch coast at Helvoetsluys. To this place Charles gladly directed his steps, and reached the port and the fleet in the month of July, 1648.³

¹ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 69.

² Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. IV., p. 403.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 364.

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Here he found his brother James, Duke of York, who, being confined at Hampton Court by order of the Parliament, with the assistance of a certain Colonel Bamfield, managed to escape from the surveillance of the Commonwealth commissioners disguised as a girl; a part which he did not play well, as on more than one occasion he ran the risk of discovery, because he always placed his legs on the table for the purpose of pulling up his stockings, an operation which the young ladies of that period generally performed in a more graceful manner.¹

James, by virtue of his rank, nominally commanded the fleet, but here, as in all the Royalist councils, dissensions prevailed; Bamfield, an untrustworthy man, intriguing to induce the crews to set sail before the arrival of Charles, so as to continue the command in the hands of those who directed the actions of James.

The timely arrival of the heir apparent upset these plans. Charles, who loved the sea, expressed a great anxiety to sail at once, a course well calculated to keep up the spirits of the sailors; so, provisions and especially beer having been supplied, largely by the generosity of the Prince of Orange,² the fleet, consisting of eleven ships with 240 guns, sailed for Yarmouth; afterwards, as more likely to capture the Commonwealth merchantmen, it put into the Downs.

For a time success attended the expedition, prizes to the amount of £12,000 being taken and great alarm and dissatisfaction created among the citizens of London.³

In August, Lauderdale, the most prominent of the Scotch "Engagers," or moderate Covenanters, joined the squadron, and at once attempted to renew negotiations with Charles for the purpose of inducing him to sail for Scotland.

After many consultations with the prince, of whose capacity he formed a very high opinion, Lauderdale came to the conclusion that the question of religion, or, as he put it, of "divine worship," would furnish the stumbling block.

¹ "Life of James II.," Vol. I., p. 29.

² Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. IV., p. 374.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 400.

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Finally he attended the meeting of the Council, "where I was commanded by the prince to sit down by Prince Rupert, which with some ceremony I did. I then pressed the prince all I could and answered all the objections I know." With considerable acuteness Lauderdale perceived the strength of the various factions among the royal advisers and declared : "At last, it was demonstrated to me that it was impossible for me to obtain more in religion from the prince. A great parti was formed against it."¹ No definite arrangement could be effected, and by reason of a "scarceness of provision in the fleet, occasioned by the large number of landsmen aboard," the necessity arose of returning to Holland.

At this Lauderdale took his departure, which as he complained, "is heartily longed for by me, for truly I am weary of wagging at sea."

Led by those who were antagonistic to Lauderdale, the sailors got it into their heads that the Covenanting Lords desired the prince to sail at once for Scotland in a single ship, thus leaving the remainder of the fleet to take care of itself. "Whereupon the seamen came to the upper deck, beseeching his Highness that he would not go from them until the opportunity could be found of attacking the Parliamentary admiral, the Earl of Warwick."

Charles allayed their fears until, on the fall of Colchester, despairing of obtaining any further success, denuded of money and supplies, he and his advisers reluctantly determined to return to Goree.

Again the crews approached the prince, "cursing Lord Culpeper and my Lord Lauderdale and threatening to throw them overboard. The prince, for no one else dared, set again upon the seamen to desire their leave, asking them if they would not go with him wherever he went, and gave them such kind words that at length his ship was, after a sort, content to go to Holland."

But fate almost brought about the contest so ardently desired ; on 29th August the Parliamentary fleet, under the Earl of Warwick, unexpectedly hove in sight and a battle

¹ Hamilton Papers, p. 232.

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appeared imminent. Contrary winds, so often the case in the naval engagements of the period, prevented a decisive action ; all preparations, however, were made, and as an eye-witness describes : "The prince behaved himself with as much gallantry and courage in this business as ever you saw. For when the Lords and all the seamen came to desire him to go down into the hold under the deck, he would not hear of it, but told them his honour was more to him than his safety, and desired them not to speak of it any more."¹

Bad management both of the naval and financial arrangements soon brought all the operations to a close ; "so much ill-husbandry and so much direct cheating in managing all the money raised upon the prizes,"² declared Hyde, while the distrust between the Cavaliers and the Presbyterians, shown especially by Rupert, ever a source of weakness to the side for which he fought, impaired the efficiency of the fleet, which ill-disciplined, ill-provisioned and ill-commanded, obtained no success and eventually retreated to an anchorage off the coast of Holland.

The Parliamentary ships followed ; probably the whole Royalist force would have been captured by them, had not the squadron of Van Tromp, "Van Butterbox," as the sailors called him, by order of the States intervened and kept the peace between the belligerents.

Being debarred from fighting their enemy, the Royalist commanders fell to quarrelling among themselves ; finally Rupert superseded Lord Willoughby of Parham, and with the vessels which still adhered to the cause of the King sailed for Ireland to the assistance, if such it could be called, of Ormonde, leaving the two princes ashore at Goree.

The States of Holland, with limited generosity, provided a subsidy of 10,000 guilders a day for ten days only, to be applied to the sustenance of Charles and his brother, who on the cessation of this allowance became the guests of the Prince of Orange.³

¹ Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. II., p. 414.

² Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. IV., pp. 453 *et passim*.

³ Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. II., p. 414.

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Here once more Hyde joined the company and assisted the brothers with his invaluable advice. Ill times were falling upon the exiled family. The progress of the Fronde in Paris so straitened the circumstances of the French court that the Queen Mother, Anne of Austria, declared that neither she nor her son Louis had a sou to spend nor "credit to obtain a dinner nor a gown," while Henrietta Maria and her little daughter Henriette suffered such depths of penury as, in a winter of extreme severity, to be obliged to remain all day in bed, not possessing the means to buy a faggot wherewith to light a fire until provided by the generosity of the Cardinal de Retz.¹

Under these depressing conditions Charles, probably by the wise advice of the always economical Hyde, reduced his household to the smallest dimensions and took up his abode at Breda, the private demesne of the Prince of Orange, thus placing himself outside the territorial jurisdiction of the States of Holland.

Here he received three letters from his father, addressed "To you who are the son of our love ;" exalted and pathetic, as, indeed, were all the writings of this most ill-fated monarch :

"We know not but that this may be the last time we may speak to you or the world publicly, we are sensible into whose hands we have fallen, and yet we bless God we have these inward refreshments the malice of our enemies cannot perturb." ²

Charles I. prophesied truly. In January the prince heard of the grave danger in which his father lay ; strenuously he besought the intercession of the States of Holland to save his parent's life,³ and then he personally despatched to Cromwell that blank piece of paper, still to be seen in the Bodleian Library, signed with his own name, so that the victor might insert over the signature whatever conditions he deemed sufficient to save the King's life.

¹ *Memoires de Cardinal de Retz.*

² Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. IV., p. 500.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 517.

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All was in vain ; on the 30th January, 1649, by the violent death of his father, Charles II. became King of England, *de jure*.

Of that tragedy this is not the place to speak ; but it created a horror and agony in those who supported the cause of the dead King so intense as to palliate any steps they might take, both then and thereafter, against the authors of the deed, and no event of the reign of Charles II. is greater to his credit than the fact that, when the opportunity for sating his vengeance arrived, he displayed a merciful restraint towards the murderers of his father hardly to be expected from him and, assuredly, but little deserved by them.

When the first transport of grief subsided, Henrietta Maria naturally desired the company of her eldest son, and so directed him to join her at St. Germain's. Charles, however, in no way intended to submit himself to the restraint of his mother's imperious temper ; for some months he continued his stay at Breda, and in this proceeding obtained the support of both Hyde and Ormonde, for, as can be seen in the letters of Lord Hatton, the old councillors of the King viewed with grave mistrust the conduct and designs of the Queen and her favourite Jermyn.¹

The former problem still remained unsolved. Should the destination of the young monarch be Ireland or Scotland ?

On the 1st February the Scots proclaimed Charles II. King of Scotland, though at the same time they gave a distinct intimation that he would not be admitted to the exercise of any regal authority unless he signed what Hyde pungently called " that damnable Covenant." ²

The little court was thronged with Scotchmen in great variety, Lauderdale, Lanrick and the " Engagers," who, turned out of their own country by the intolerance of their co-religionists, came to Charles to fill his ears with their complaints ; the chivalrous Montrose also hastened to pay homage to his King and offered his sword to the Royalist cause.

¹ Nicolas, Correspondence, p. 117 ; Clarendon, " Rebellion," Vol. V., p. 3.

² Clarendon, " Rebellion," Vol. V., p. 4 ; Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. II., p. 473.

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On the 22nd February, Charles secretly appointed the Marquis of Montrose Captain-General of Scotland, and the gallant soldier promptly commenced to make preparations for supporting his master's interests in that kingdom.¹

Two days before this appointment was signed Sir James Douglas came to the Hague as an emissary from the covenanting Parliament, and the reconciliation of the contending factions provided a heavy task indeed for a boy of eighteen. "It would have been as easy for Charles to have persuaded the English Parliament to have rejected Cromwell," says an eye-witness, as to bring these embittered opponents together to an amicable arrangement.²

In March a fresh deputation from the Covenanters arrived with definitive propositions.

The story of their mission is narrated by Baillie, one of the few ministers who, while a Covenanter, remembered that he was a Christian, and the story throws interesting light on the proceedings of the envoys and describes, at first hand, the impression which Charles then made upon those who had intercourse with him.

The commission arrived safely at Rotterdam on Tuesday, the 22nd March, and on Friday continued their journey to Delft where they rested till Monday, partly for the purpose of keeping a day of humiliation for themselves and partly because the information reached them that his Majesty would be taken up with his Easter devotions until the Tuesday following—probably a subterfuge to delay the interview. On Sunday they preached and prayed to themselves, on Monday put their papers and affairs in order; being thus adequately equipped, spiritually and temporally, they arrived at the Hague late one evening and next day paid their first visit to the court.

Upon presenting their terms, as a preliminary they demanded the removal of Montrose from all offices, to which Charles replied by requesting them to formulate their propositions together. To this, after some dissent, the com-

¹ Napier's "Life of Montrose," p. 452.

² Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. V., p. 18.

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missioners sullenly acquiesced, for they found that James Graham possessed many and powerful friends in the English Council.

Upon their second visit they presented the young King with the National Covenant, the League and Covenant, the Directory, the Confession of Faith, the Catechism and the Proposition for Government, all bound together in a book "so handsome as we could get." It is to be feared that the elegant exterior hardly recommended the solid contents to the very young man who was supposed to conscientiously absorb this solid and serious diet.

The commissioners also "spoke something"—probably long—"on the subject and asked for frequent interviews" with the King, whom they found of a "very sweet and courteous disposition. It is all the pities in the world but that he were in good company"; the reason for the last remark being provided by the fact that there were no Scotchmen on the King's Council.

After expressing an opinion that the majority of the royal advisers were much averse to the League and Covenant, the narrator continues: "It is verily a great pity, for the King is one of the most gentle, innocent, well-inclined princes as far as yet appears that lives in this world; a trim person and of manly courage, understands pretty well, speaks not much, would God he were among us."

A private audience heightened the excellent opinion which Baillie formed of Charles. "I found the King, in my judgment of a very meek and equitable disposition, understanding and judicious enough though firm in the tenets his education had planted in him. If God would send him among us without some of his present councillors, I think he would make with God's blessing as good a king as Britain has seen these 100 years."¹

No agreement, however, could possibly be effected; to the Scots the Covenant was all in all; with Hyde and the Council it was anathema.

Under the pressure of those who advocated some under-

¹ Baillie's Correspondence, p. 331.

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standing with Scotland as absolutely necessary, Charles requested Hyde and Lord Cottenham, the two most persistent opponents of any such scheme, to go on an embassy to Spain to solicit aid. Hyde, weary of the business which "having no prospect but towards despair was rendered more grievous by the continued contests and animosity between persons," acquiesced in the royal decision, yet, too clear-sighted not to perceive that the proposed journey was only conceived for the purpose of getting rid of him for a time, bluntly told the King so; eventually he and his colleague departed, and at the next Council meeting "the Scots had a better say of it than ever before."¹

The negotiations dragged on though no definite conclusion seemed possible, Charles giving but a qualified adhesion to the Covenant and implying, if not expressing, a hope that the efforts of Montrose might produce a more pronounced feeling in his favour within the northern kingdom.

Angry and disappointed, the commissioners departed, openly declaring that the time would come when the young King must needs seek their aid.

While earning golden opinions for tact, talent, and assiduity from all with whom he worked, Charles found opportunity for other and lighter pursuits.

He made love to his cousin the Princess Sophia, sister to Prince Rupert. This young lady, like so many others, wrote her memoirs, and, judging from her own admission, both herself and her family were the owners of sharp tongues and some discrimination.

Her elder sister, a very superior person, suffered from a red nose, which sorely tried her philosophy. "How can you expect me to go out with the Queen with a nose like this?" she once asked. "Well, you can hardly expect her Majesty to wait until you get another one," came the pertinent reply.

Sophia declares that at first she became attracted by her tall dark cousin, but later arrived at the conclusion that he

¹ Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. V., p. 38; Nicolas, Correspondence, 124.

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“ was a prince richly endowed by Nature, but not sufficiently by fortune to allow him to think of marriage.”¹

Charles by his own conduct furnished grounds for the refusal. During his stay in Holland he contracted a connection with the notorious Lucy Walters, who called herself Mrs. Barlow, and accepted the paternity of her son James, afterwards Duke of Monmouth, who came into the world about this time. Following, perhaps, the custom of the age, he made no secret of the disgraceful intrigue, but openly informed his cousin that she was handsomer than Mrs. Barlow, a remark which, not unnaturally, failed to predispose the young lady in favour of such an indiscreet admirer, and caused her to make the excuse that “ the sufferings she experienced from a corn on her foot would prevent her walking any longer with his Majesty.”

Failing in this quest for a wife and being heavily in debt, after having paid a visit to Brussels in the vain hope of extracting some aid from Spain, Charles, much against his will, in July journeyed back to France and the companionship of his mother.

He returned a different person from the diffident lad who had departed a year ago. On his mother endeavouring to control both the composition and management of the Council, he informed her that, for the future, he intended to act on his own judgment, and in other ways plainly intimated that he would not suffer any interference with his business or designs.²

In one respect, however, he still complied with her wishes and resumed, though with no great ardour, his courtship of Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

The wooing, however, did not progress well ; in some respects Mademoiselle found the suitor improved ; he undoubtedly showed a fine figure and a graceful carriage, but he was a quarter of an hour before he uttered a single word, and even then his conversation proved neither amusing nor interesting. He knew nothing of his own political affairs

¹ “ Memoirs,” Princess Sophia.

² Clarendon, “ Rebellion,” Vol. IV., p. 55.

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or pretended to know nothing, and so annoyed Mademoiselle with his silence as to draw from her the remark, "Les Bourbons sont gens fort appliqué aux bagatelles et peu solide."

But worse was to follow: a passionate lover should feed only on his mistress's beauty, or, at any rate, on the least material food available; Charles displayed far too healthy an appetite: "On dira il ne mange point d'ortolans, il se jeta sur la piece de bœuf et sur un epaule de mouton comme s'il n'eut eu que cela." Perhaps, poor fellow, with the restricted *ménage* of his exiled family, he had not enjoyed such a chance for many days, and even the full-flavoured charms of La Grande Mademoiselle yielded to the superior fascination of a heavy and substantial meal.¹

Bad news came to St. Germain's of the gradual waning of the Royalist cause in Ireland, and the question soon arose as to where Charles should take up his abode. From France he received neither welcome nor assistance. The household of both the King and Queen Mother lacked money and means of subsistence, although Henrietta received aid from various friends, the eccentric old Princess of Condé sending "an extraordinary fat mutton to the Queen as a kind of monster for the fatness of it, and in the belly of the sheep were 2,000 crowns."²

Such supplies Lord Jermyn, "full of soup and gold," who managed all the Queen's affairs, kept for himself and for her, so as the King's presence in France became more and more embarrassing to the French court, terribly afraid of the threatening power of Cromwell, Charles deemed it advisable to leave St. Germain's and to travel northward through Normandy until he could embark for Jersey, which place, for a time, he intended to make his headquarters.

In September, accompanied by his brother James, he started on his journey, crossing the sea in the beautiful yacht, the present of the loyal islanders, and landed safely in Jersey with less than five shillings in his pocket.³

¹ "Memoires de Mademoiselle Montpensier."

² Nicolas, Correspondence.

³ Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. V., p. 77.

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Here he remained in suspense awaiting advice from Ormonde, who hesitated to ask his monarch to risk his life in Ireland until the result of the siege of Dublin became known.

When Cromwell devastated that unhappy land with a cruelty so ruthless as to leave wounds unhealed even till to-day, Charles felt, in the words of the Covenanting minister, Baillie, now the "rotten reed" of Ireland is indeed broken, and, being without an alternative, listened once more to the renewed advances of the Scotch Parliament, which, realising that at last the King had fallen into their hands, despatched Sir James Winram, of Liberton, to consult with the English Presbyterians in refuge in Holland, and afterwards convey to Charles the result of the deliberation and such conditions as might be deemed advisable.¹

These terms were at first so "harsh and scabrous" as to preclude any hope of settlement, but ameliorated, probably by the efforts of Alderman Bunce, the head of the Presbyterian body, "a good merry honest fellow, if any good can be in a Presbyterian," they were presented and discussed by the King's Council.²

Great diversity of opinion existed in that body, though the King himself "expressed such moderation, patience and judgement as was admirable in a person of his years and such truly as I little expected of him, repressing by his excellent temper such heat and animosity as would certainly have otherwise destroyed the business."³

The situation of affairs was intricate and difficult, calling for the best qualities of a far-seeing and competent statesman; for a young man of nineteen years old, ill-educated and badly advised, it presented almost insoluble problems.

Montrose, supplied with some small sums of money, with his usual chivalrous courage endeavoured to stir up the wild Highlanders to rise in support of the King. He bore Charles's commission of captain-general and admiral and

¹ Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. V., p. 16; Baillie, p. 346; Carte's "Ormonde," p. 87.

² Clarendon, State Papers, p. 491.

³ Carte, Bryon's Letter.

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received the whole-hearted support of Rupert and the old Cavaliers, but the entire Covenanting body bitterly and rancorously opposed him ; to them James Graham, the Malignant, was the embodiment of evil, and many of the English Council held the view, now known to be sound, that nothing except a real national uprising could possibly restore Charles to the throne of his father, while a mere Highland raid, such as Montrose contemplated, would only bring about more useless shedding of blood and a greater division in the national feeling.

On the 13th February Charles left Jersey, travelled to Beauvais, where he met his mother, who urged him not to take the Covenant and never to desert the Irish, with whom she, as a devout Roman Catholic, deeply sympathised ; then in March he reached Breda.

Destitute of money, his appeal to the continental monarchs only producing a mere pittance, he lay at the mercy of the Covenanters, who knowing their power put forward the strictest and severest terms, the repudiation of Montrose, the Irish, Lauderdale, the other " Engagers " and, above all, the taking of the Covenant.¹

For a month Charles struggled against an agreement which his soul abhorred, yet the force of circumstances proved too strong ; Hopton and Nicolas, the old Cavaliers, were dismissed from the Council (by whose influence it is not easy to tell), Hamilton, Newcastle, and Buckingham taking their places, greatly to the disgust of Lord Hatton, a close friend of Nicolas, who writes : " God help us when Hamilton, Mr. Long, Newcastle and Buckingham rule in Council." ²

Every narrative of these proceedings which is available demonstrates one thing, at least, unmistakably—that the Council was hopelessly divided on all subjects of policy and that the young King could place no reliance on the wisdom or the foresight of his advisers.

His mother, the Prince of Orange (a sensible, earnest, and moderate man), the old Duke of Lorraine, and even Queen

¹ Balfour's " Annals," p. 3 ; Clarendon, " Rebellion," Vol. V., p. 116.

² Nicolas, Correspondence.

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Christina of Sweden counselled surrender to the Scottish terms ; the majority of the Council pressed the same course. How could a boy of little or no experience in public affairs on his own initiative resist such pressure ? ¹

We are told that Charles expressed great passion and bitter execration at abandoning Montrose ; we learn from another source that he even contemplated sailing to Denmark rather than yield to such hard conditions, but the weight of earnest advice, as well as his own natural desire to retain his kingly inheritance, constrained him to yield, and on the 1st May he signed the treaty.²

Two days later he sent an order to Montrose to disband his army. This order never reached the unfortunate and most gallant hero who, destitute of all organised military force, suffered a crushing defeat at Corbiesdale and fell into the hands of his inveterate personal enemies who proceeded at once to satisfy their vengeance.³

At the urgent request of Charles, Argyle gave an assurance that the life of his noble foe should be spared ; with characteristic falsehood and hypocrisy, Gillespie Grumach—to use the name his opponents called him, a man of “ craft, subtlety and falsehood,” as his own father describes him—broke his pledge and permitted his great rival to be executed with every detail of ignominy and cruelty.

That the whole episode of the encouragement and subsequent abandonment of Montrose was a disastrous mistake which casts a grave reflection on the honour and wisdom of those who advised the step, and, inferentially, on the monarch who approved that advice, is undoubted ; but the strictures made by historians, and especially such a statement as that by his conduct in this matter Charles “ owes his first claim to the execration of all honest men,” only shows how even learned writers may allow their judgment to be warped by personal bias.

¹ Carte's Letters, pp. 240, 322 ; Napier's “ Montrose,” p. 464.

² Carte's “ Ormonde,” p. 132 ; Nicolas, Correspondence ; Clarendon, “ Rebellion,” Vol. V., p. 115 ; Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. II., p. 518.

³ Balfour's “ Annals,” Vol. IV., pp. 24, 25.

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That at this time the young King showed ability and some strength of character can be gathered from the records of contemporaries,¹ yet it is ridiculous to suppose that a Council composed of full-grown men of high rank and considerable experience in the management of State affairs would allow their judgment to be swayed materially by a half-fledged boy of nineteen years old, king though he might be.

Every incident, as narrated by those who describe the proceedings, bears testimony to the great part played by the Privy Council of Charles in all these transactions ; the grave fault which the advisers of the King committed lay in permitting Montrose to embark on his hopeless quest, and in not foreseeing that which actually took place, that the raid from the Highlands was not only useless but a positive blunder, most detrimental to the cause for which he threw away his gallant life. No effort by Charles or the little knot of Cavaliers round him could have made the attempt successful, especially as the foreign aid upon which they relied had long been withdrawn ; but while severe blame should be attached to those who while negotiating with one party at the same time secretly organised an armed rising directed against it, yet to attribute the evil result of such policy to the personal depravity of a penniless and helpless lad, king in name alone, is neither judicially fair nor historically correct.

On the 2nd June Charles embarked for Scotland ; for twenty-two days he remained at sea blown about by contrary winds, and “ only by a very great Providence escaped the Parliament ships, for as he came to land four of them had only gone out of the same bay three or four hours before, a Scotch mist falling down and taking away their view, but both being visible to those on shore.”²

Having escaped capture by his enemies, he landed, only to become the slave of his so-called friends. The insults and indignities heaped upon their defenceless King by the

¹ Carte's Letters, p. 296 ; Carte's Bryon's Letter.

² Calendar of State Papers, 1650, p. 205.

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Scotch Covenanters form a record of petty spite and narrow malignity almost incredible of belief even in the annals of religious intolerance.

His friends were separated from him, with the exception of Henry Seymour and Buckingham at whose scandalous mode of living Argyle connived, because "he advised the King to put himself wholly in their hands."¹

Then Charles's life became one long theological exercise. "The King wrought himself into as grave a deportment as he could, he heard many prayers and sermons, some of great length. I remember on one fast day, there were six sermons preached without intermission; I was there myself and not a little weary of so tedious a service," declares Burnet, himself not remarkable for the brevity of his discourses.² "The King was not allowed so much as to walk abroad on a Sunday, and if at any time there had been any gaiety at court such as dancing or playing at cards he was severely reproved for it."³

But one instance of levity, in this case tinged with humour, is recorded. Hume informs us that on a certain occasion Robert Douglas, a celebrated and interminable preacher, being the spectator of certain episodes which occurred between Charles and some young person of the female sex, gravely reproved him and pronounced that during such amorous interludes, for the future, the window curtains must invariably be drawn.⁴

Jealousy and mistrust surrounded this "poor King who has nothing of it but the name." Wherever he went some sour fanatic spied upon his doings; he visited the camp and inspected the army; as usual his charm of manner gained the hearts of all, but, as he wrote to Duke Hamilton: "I have been so narrowly watched by the severe Churchmen that I could not answer your letter before. . . . I think I should be as safe in the army as here, for the soldiers were so kind to me at my first coming that, the next day after, the Commissioners of the Kirk desired me to retire out of the

¹ Calendar of State Papers, 1650, p. 205.

² Burnet, Vol. I., p. 35.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴ Hume, Vol. VII., p. 191.

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army ; pretending it was for the safety of my person, but indeed it was for fear that I should get too great interest with the soldiers." ¹

Assurances and declarations were demanded of him, insulting to his family, dishonourable to himself. He was compelled solemnly to declare that he repented of the blood-guiltiness of his father, the idolatry of his mother, and his own malignity.² Having made this disgraceful avowal, with the cynical humour which ever after remained with him, he wearily remarked : " I almost repent that I ever was born."

From the abject misery of his surroundings the approach of Cromwell's invading force partly relieved him. With a bigotry so gross as almost to excite pity, the Covenanters purged the army of all who did not profess the strictest tenets of their narrow creed, hundreds of competent officers, thousands of trained soldiers thus being dismissed. Preachers and schoolmasters, clerks and labourers, were admitted to the ranks, the sincerity of their adhesion to the Solemn League and Covenant, in the opinion of the leaders, remedying any deficiency in military discipline or experience.

The Covenanting divines expressed the bitterest contempt for Cromwell, that idolatrous Agag, as they chose to designate him—surely, as Lord Macaulay might have observed, the very worst simile possible, as the only prominent feature of the Amalekitish chieftain recorded by history is the fact that he "walked delicately," an attribute which neither physically, mentally nor politically can be ascribed to that phenomenal personality Oliver Cromwell.

If the Covenanting general had possessed the ordinary military ability expected in the commander of a great army, Cromwell might have sustained a defeat which probably would have altered the history of England. His forces, a "poor, scattered, hungry discouraged army," wearied by the march, destitute of stores and provisions, far from its

¹ Hamilton Papers.

² Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. V., p. 147; Balfour, pp. 91, 95.

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base, was in no condition to continue its advance into a difficult and hostile country, and lay at the mercy of the Scottish troops, who occupied a strong position on the hills above Dunbar.

But the Covenanting commander, too nerveless to withstand the constant interference of the Kirk Commissioners, who obtruded themselves into all the military councils, gave up his strength of position, urged on by the ministers to smite the enemy hip and thigh, and venturing into the low ground afforded to Cromwell's well-seasoned veterans, who, war-worn as they were, yet possessed equal enthusiasm and far superior discipline to their self-sufficient adversaries, the opportunity they sought. "2nd Sept. being Tuesday, by the breake of day, our army being in grate security, having left the hill, a grate part of them (which was ther strenth and forte) wer surprissed and routted by Cromwel and the sectarian army, maney takin of the footte, maney woundit and about 8 or 900 killed." ¹

The defeat at Dunbar gave a rude shock to the self-complacency of the Covenanters. At first, with increased bigotry, they designed to further purge the army and renewed their persecution of the unhappy King to a degree which became unbearable. They refused to allow him to retain the services of any of those friends and companions in whom he most trusted, and their attitude to him was such as to convey to Charles the impression that he would be "delivered up to the English and all hes servants hanged."

Middleton, one of Montrose's lieutenants, hearing of the King's condition, managed to raise a small body of Royalists and to get into communication with Charles, who, fearing that Lord Lorne, Argyle's son, the commander of the Royal bodyguard, contemplated carrying out the plot for his betrayal to the English, "took horse as if to go a-hawking but crossed the Tay and stayed not until he came to Clewe in Angus. . . . But when he came, and in place of the great promised forces saw nothing but a small company of Highlanders, he presently sent for Robert Montgomery who was

¹ Balfour, "Annales," Vol. IV., p. 97.

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near with his regiment and without more ado did willingly return exceedingly confounded and dejected by that ill-advised start.”¹ “Over weired and werey fearfull” is Balfour’s description of his plight.

“The Start,” as Charles’s sudden flight is always designated by the Scotch historians, served at least to open the eyes of the Covenanting leaders to the danger they ran in entirely alienating the King from their cause. The more moderate among them began to assert themselves; the “Engaging” lords, Hamilton, Lauderdale, and others, after sitting on the stool of repentance, were once more admitted to the King’s counsels, and by the end of the year Charles’s condition was rendered tolerable.

In January, 1651, he was crowned King at Scone with some few appropriate ceremonies and many unnecessary discourses.

“Douglas from 2nd Kings, xi., had a very wise, pertinent and good sermon. Argyle put the crown on his head; Douglas prayed well; the Chancellor set him on the throne; Douglas exhorted well; when all was over he with great earnestness pressed sincerity and constancy in the Covenant on the King, dilating at length King James’ breach of the Covenant”; and after drawing further lessons from Nehemiah and “denouncing many plagues from Jeremiah on him if he did not sincerely keep the oath now taken,” he closed all with a prayer and the 20th Psalm.²

Small wonder that Charles felt little respect and less liking for the Iscariots who sold his father to his death and the jaundiced Pharisees who attempted to limit the will of an all-loving God within the narrow boundaries of their own warped and miserable creed.

Tedious and disheartening as the coronation ceremony must have been, it yet proved the precursor of a more enlightened and sensible policy. An appeal made to the national feeling of Scotland did not lack response; the discharged officers and men flocked back to the ranks of the

¹ Baillie’s Correspondence.

² *Ibid.*

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army, and soon, both in numbers and spirit, the Scottish forces regained something of their former condition.

To Charles the change proved very welcome. "The King is certainly very intelligent, industrious and active on all occasions, but too forward to hazard his person in any attempt against the rebels."¹ Encouraged by his example, before long 20,000 men gathered under the standard, ready once more to oppose the march of the English invader.

It is needless here to relate the operations by which Cromwell, a great soldier, completely out-manceuvred the Scottish general, took place after place and position after position, until only Edinburgh Castle remained to the Royalist cause, and a desperate raid into England appeared to be the sole alternative left to the Scottish army.

It is equally needless to repeat the thrice-told tale of the fight at Worcester, how, joined by none of the English nobility or gentry, except the gallant Earl of Derby, outnumbered and out-generalled, the Royalist forces were scattered and destroyed. To the courage and abilities of Charles all bear witness except Burnet, who insinuates the contrary; but from eye-witnesses two accounts at least have been preserved, which speak of the coolness and skill with which the King in person endeavoured to re-animate and restore the spirit of his troops. "But certainly a braver prince never lived, having in the day of the fight hazarded his person much more than any officer of his army, riding from regiment to regiment and leading them upon service with all the encouragement (calling every officer by name) which the example of a magnanimous general could afford, shewing as much steadiness of mind and as much undaunted courage in such continued danger as, had not God covered his head and preserved his sacred person, he must in all reason have perished that day."²

Of the long flight after the battle, the narrow escapes and the touching devotion shown by many of his subjects to their hunted King, two detailed accounts have been pre-

¹ Nicolas, "Correspondence," p. 254; Carte's Letters, Vol. II., p. 15.

² Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. II., p. 562.

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served ; one dictated by Charles himself to Pepys, the other written by Thomas Blount, a Roman Catholic gentleman who suffered personally for the Royal cause.

Forced away from the field of battle by some urgent friends, for many weeks Charles wandered with his life in his hand. The romantic adventures he encountered, especially the incident of the Boscobel oak, have made a mark in English tradition and are remembered even in these forgetful days ; but that which specially shines forth in both these narratives is the self-sacrificing devotion of those who risked their lives, their liberty and their property to shelter a king from whom, at that time, they could have expected nothing.

That the charm and adaptability of Charles's nature largely helped in securing assistance and effecting his escape can easily be seen from a perusal of the accounts of his flight. His quickness of resource and readiness of wit, under most difficult circumstances, were quite remarkable ; as, for instance, when he, masquerading as the servant, Will Jackson, solemnly rebuked a jovial squire for using profane language ; and also when, in conversation with a Roundhead blacksmith, discussing the reported capture of " that rogue Charles Stuart," Charles himself, probably with a vivid recollection of his own sojourn in Scotland, remarked : " Aye ! and he deserves hanging more than all the rest for bringing the Scots into England." ¹

It is evident from the records of the life of Charles II. that up to this date he showed many high and promising attributes, marred no doubt by a proneness to the dissolute life then existent, but yet of such a nature as might, if fostered and corrected, have produced a virile, courageous, and accomplished ruler ; but every circumstance of his sojourn in Scotland and of his subsequent long exile conduced to strengthen his vices and increase those qualities of cynicism and contempt for high and honourable motives which were so manifest in his later years. " The King detested the Covenant, yet he was persuaded to take it . . . so early was he embarked on a course of hypocrisy very unnatural

¹ " Boscobel."

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to a young man. A man that acts contrary to his real sentiments can never bear reflection, and this seems to have laid the foundation of that unthinking kind of life which his Majesty too much observed." ¹ It is undoubtedly true, as Ormonde here states, that the insults inflicted on him by the Covenanters left an indelible mark on Charles's character, and it is also conceivable that the events of this period exercised a deep influence over his religious convictions and consequently on his political conduct. He could but contrast the loving self-sacrifice of the Penderells, the Lanes, and others, many, if not all, members of the Roman Catholic Church, with the behaviour of the ferocious fanatics who, under the guise of religion, made his life miserable during his stay in Scotland, and the remembrance disposed him to extend a tolerance to those who observed the former faith, and to regard the professors of the latter as hypocrites in religion, false and disloyal in disposition. To the Penderells and others who helped him in his flight he bestowed adequate rewards and, by special clauses in the Acts of Parliament, accorded them permission to practise their own creed, a freedom he would gladly have extended to all their co-religionists; but with regard to the Covenanters, he never again set foot in Scotland and let Lauderdale and Claverhouse rule the country with harshness and severity.

After many vicissitudes Charles, accompanied only by Wilmot, again reached France, so destitute of even decent clothes that the governor of the town in which they landed regarded them as disreputable persons, and was prepared to treat them accordingly until they convinced him of their true rank.

For the first six months of his stay in France the King lived entirely on the generosity of the Cardinal de Retz. "His Majesty had not changed his shirt all the way from England; upon his arrival in Paris indeed he had one lent him by my Lord Jermyn, but the Queen his mother had not money to buy him one the next day." The Cardinal then relates that, not having sufficient funds himself, he borrowed

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1,500 pistoles and took them to Lord Taafe,¹ the chamberlain.

Later on the French court provided Charles with an allowance of 6,000 livres a month ; but even this not too generous dole was at once annexed by Lord Jermyn on behalf of the Queen, who complained that she was "not able to bear the charge of the King's dyet but that he must bear one half of the expenses of her table," and the very first night he supped with his mother the money was "estopped by the Queen's treasurer."²

Straitened as were the King's circumstances, his unhappy followers fell into an infinitely worse condition. Every letter of Hyde or Nicolas contains allusions to their extreme distress ; Hyde deplores "the intolerable beggary it is not in your power to believe the wants we are in." "I have not been master of a crown these three months, am cold for want of clothes and a fire and owe for all the meat I have eaten." He piteously declares that he is not able to pay the postage for his voluminous correspondence, "the constant expense of 7 or 8 livres a week for postage of letters which I borrow scandalously of my friends" ; and again he complains : "I am so cold I can scarce hold my pen and have not three sous in the world to buy a faggot." One is almost tempted, while reading Clarendon's interminable sentences, to wonder if it would not have been well for the frigid Chancellor to have followed the example of Murger's "Bohemians" and made a cheery fire with his own epistolary compositions. The Duke of Ormonde, a very great nobleman, was compelled to put himself "at Pension with other gentlemen at a Pistole a week for his dyet and to walk the street on foot, which was no honourable custom in Paris ;" a condition made all the harder to bear by the sight of the comparative luxury in which Lord Jermyn lived, presumably at the expense of the Queen and her royal son.³

Charles at first felt his deplorable condition acutely.

¹ "Memoirs de Cardinal de Retz."

² Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. V., p. 254.

³ Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. III., pp. 3, 52, 120, 124, 126 ; Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. V., p. 254.

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While bearing high testimony to the loyalty and affection of his own party, he bitterly accused the Scots of failing him at the critical moment, and the knowledge of the hopelessness of his future as well as his present pitiful position caused him to be "very sad and sombre for the most part, that cheerfulness which, against his nature, he strove to show at his first coming hither having lasted but a few days, and he is very silent also."¹

There was talk at this time of a marriage between James, Duke of York, and the daughter of the Duke de Longueville, a somewhat uninviting young lady, "of low stature and that deformed." Gossip also asserted that Charles himself now renewed his advances to Mademoiselle de Montpensier; but neither courting came to much—Henrietta Maria stopped the first and Mazarin vetoed the other.

For a time, it is true, Charles not only recommenced his love-making, but even made progress in the favour of Mademoiselle. Although his hair had been cropped, his moustaches had grown, and she thought him greatly improved in appearance; he also, during his travels, acquired the advantage of being able to plead his suit in French and his graphic accounts of his many adventures—he already knew the art of story telling—excited the admiration of the young lady, who especially agreed with the opinions, which Charles with evident sincerity advanced, "That Scotland was a miserable place to live in as there was a not single pretty woman to look at and they considered it a sin to listen to a fiddle"—in fact, that during his stay in that country he became so "furieusement ennuyée," that the loss of a battle came as a perfect blessing, for it enabled him to return to France and, he doubtless implied, Mademoiselle.²

However, at this time the young lady hoped that her cousin, Louis le Grand himself, might become a victim to her charms, so she declared she could never marry a Protestant, and, as Charles showed no inclination to change his religion,

¹Calendar of State Papers, 1651, p. 2.

²"Memoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier"; Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. III.

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further intercourse between them ceased, as evidently Mazarin intended, it being no part of the policy of that astute statesman to allow the great Montpensier fortune to leave France.

With the cessation of the courtship between himself and La Grande Mademoiselle began that long period of forced inaction which proved so detrimental to the character of Charles. With no fixed employment, bound by no duty, almost, after his experience in Scotland and England, without hope of regaining his inheritance, he fell into those habits of listless indolence, mixed, unfortunately, with dissolute indulgence, which remained to him for the rest of his life. At first he made strenuous efforts to find some means of breaking the monotonous inactivity against which his better nature fretted. He endeavoured to obtain a commission in the French service, his brother James now being a colonel in that army with a decent if not generous income. On this being refused by Mazarin, Charles offered to serve in the Dutch fleet against the Cromwellian forces ; he contemplated a journey to Russia, and actually sent Middleton to the Highlands of Scotland to attempt a rising in which he himself would have participated, although so greatly did he hate the Scotch that, on one occasion, when discussing the matter with the Duke of Orleans, he was heard to say that " he would rather be hanged " than again set foot in the northern kingdom.¹

All these projects failed, Mazarin covertly opposing them, for he meant to keep the King entirely dependent on French bounty and to use him as a piece in the great diplomatic game then being played.

Disappointed in all his hopes and failing in each endeavour, it is to be feared that Madame de Motteville, an eye-witness, accurately described the condition of Charles when she wrote : " The greatest heroes and sages of antiquity did not guide their lives by greater principles of action than this young prince felt and declared at the beginning of his life, but,

¹ Calendar, State Papers, 1651 ; Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. III. ; Clarendon, " Rebellion," Vol. V., p. 283.

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unfortunately, finding all his struggles vain he at last sunk into indifference, bearing all the evils which attend exile and poverty with careless insouciance and snatching all obtainable pleasures without considering the degradation they brought upon him."¹

And now Hyde, Ormonde and Nicolas, the faithful trio, who laboured so assiduously for the Royal cause, feared that the cardinal might be tempted to hand the person of Charles over to the English Republicans. By the consolidation of his sovereignty over Britain, and by the vigour and success of his government Cromwell became a European influence which no State dare affront or neglect.

To propitiate this powerful neighbour Mazarin, a wily Italian, destitute of sentiment or bowels of compassion, would, at any time which he deemed profitable, have violated the laws of hospitality and sacrificed his royal guest.

Hyde and his colleagues therefore strove earnestly to obtain permission for the King to leave French soil and retire to some country less susceptible to Cromwellian influence. Want of money, quite as much as the cardinal's opposition, for a time prevented the plan being put into effect; at length Hyde's persistence met with its reward, for Mazarin, dreading that complications might arise between the exiled Royalists and the ambassador lately accredited by Cromwell to the French court, gave his consent to Charles's removal to Germany, and actually paid all the arrears of the allowance, though in so doing he made terms "fitter to be insisted on by the meanest merchant than by a member of the Sacred College, who would be esteemed a prince of the Church." The poor Chancellor's spirit must have been greatly exercised to have poured forth this acid reflection.²

The sale of the brass guns out of Rupert's weather-beaten ships, lately put into Brest, added something to the meagre store, and a welcome increment also arrived in the shape of a sum of £3,000 transmitted by Seymour from England.

¹ "Madame de Motteville's Memoires."

² Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. V., p. 368.

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Thus equipped, Charles in July made preparations for his departure.

The States of Holland were closed to him, the United Provinces having come to terms with Cromwell in April, but on the 3rd July Charles and his little court gleefully left France, where, as he satirically observed, "he enjoyed no other pleasure than being alive," and travelled to Spa to become the guest for a while of his sister, the widowed Princess of Orange. Here he stayed a few weeks and then went on to Aix, finally taking up his abode at Cologne, the inhabitants of which accorded him a warm welcome. In this place Charles, "at the house of a widow," stayed for over two years—years of poverty, idleness, and misfortune. In France he managed to support a decent position, and though poorly lodged and pinched for money, yet observed, outwardly at least, the rank and bearing of a king. But during the four and a half years spent in wandering about Germany and Flanders neither he nor his household maintained a reputable position. It is a significant fact that he is said to have taken the "quietest of his companions" with him; nevertheless in his sojourn at Cologne, Bruges and Brussels, circumstances occurred disgraceful in themselves and detrimental to the Royal cause.¹

At the same time it should be remembered that Thurlow, Cromwell's Secretary of State, who by means of his spies knew each movement of the exiled Cavaliers, deliberately promulgated every scandalous story he could collect, as a useful means of depreciating the aspirant to the throne in the eyes of the British people.

Indeed the circumstances surrounding the King were sufficiently unpropitious to have strained the virtues of a far purer character than he possessed. Although constant communications passed between the Royalists in England and the indefatigable Hyde and Nicolas, "a secretary of secretaries," yet it was plain enough to Charles, whose experience of Worcester yet remained fresh, that no serious attempt at rebellion in England could hope to succeed.

¹ Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. III., pp. 108, 312; Thurlow.

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The management of Royalist affairs in England at this time passed into the hands of a select committee of trusted adherents called "the Sealed Knott"; even in this inner circle a traitor could be found, and for £200 per annum, "he dared not receive more," Sir Richard Willis betrayed the Royalist secrets to Cromwell and then, to save his conscience, warned the conspirators that their plans were known.¹

On more than one occasion both the King and the Chancellor used their influence to prevent premature risings, which would only have entailed death or misery on those participating in them, and the forced inaction thus entailed, together with the constant feeling of hope deferred, which in some minds would have produced melancholy and depression, in Charles begat indolence and self-indulgence. "I shall only tell your Majesty we are only now thinking how to pass our time, and in the first place of dancing, in which we find two difficulties. The one the want of the fiddlers and the other for somebody both to teach and assist at the dancing the new Dances."² So Charles writes to his aunt, and he ends with a comic complaint that the musicians, who alone can be obtained, are such as "make no difference between an himme and a coranto."

He found employment, it is true, in other ways during his stay at Cologne; he perfected his knowledge of French and learnt Italian, also he walked much for he had no coach, his horses having been sold to pay for their keep. But although we are told that Stephen Fox by the strictest economy kept the household in excellent condition, yet the means of obtaining money day by day became more difficult; applications for funds to foreign princes produced less results, and the chief source of income to the little court consisted of the contributions received from English Royalists, or the sums which the King, on his own responsibility, could borrow from generous friends.³

¹ Clarendon, *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 138; Burnet, Vol. I., p. 42.

² Ellis, *Historical Letters*, Second Series.

³ Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. V., p. 397.

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About this time an incident occurred which is valuable as throwing light on that which has been called "the insoluble mystery of Charles's religion." If Thurlow found the promulgation of scandals concerning the private life of the King useful for Republican purposes, he also felt assured that reports of Charles's conversion to Roman Catholicism would have even greater effect, and consequently frequent rumours arose of the King's intention to become a papist.

There is absolutely no evidence to show that, at this time, Charles entertained any intention of professing the Roman faith, which would inevitably have lost him all hope of being restored to his father's throne. The fact that Ormonde once saw him kneeling at mass is no more evidence to show that he was a Roman Catholic than the fact that he attended the French Protestant services at Charenton proves him to be a follower of Calvin.

By the efforts he made, at the end of 1654, to prevent the conversion to popery of his younger brother, he provided indisputable evidence that rumours of his own change of religion were untrue.

The little Princess Elizabeth died in September, 1650. On the murder of their father she and her brother, Henry, Duke of Gloucester, remained in the custody of Parliament; strong rumours arose that the child died from poison administered by Cromwell, and, though unfounded, the odium attached to such an accusation may have produced some effect on the Protector, for in February, 1653, he allowed the boy to leave England and join his mother.

Henrietta Maria, devoutly attached to the tenets of the Roman Church, already had educated her little daughter Henriette Anne, the beautiful Henriette of later days, in that faith, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Charles, who, when his mother showed unmistakable intentions of pursuing the same course with her youngest son, renewed even more strongly his protest, but without success, as the Queen claimed that up to the age of thirteen the right to completely control her children's education remained with her.

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Walter Montagu, brother to the Earl of Manchester, a strenuous proselytiser and, in other respects, a marked contrast to the tactful Father Phillips, his predecessor, who died in 1652, now held the position of Confessor to the Royal Family.

The Duke of Gloucester on reaching Paris attended the services of the English Church, which were held in the house of Sir Richard Browne, the ambassador, nominal as was the post, from Charles to the French court. Montagu persuaded the Queen to forbid his attendance and then commenced a systematic attempt to change the boy's religion.

Charles hearing the news at Cologne, at once took vigorous steps to stop the design. "I never in my life have seen the King in so great trouble of mind," writes Hyde, and, with that energy which, when roused to action, he invariably showed, Charles sent Ormonde, the trusted faithful friend, forthwith to Paris, and on the 10th November, 1654, with his own hand wrote to his brother :

"DEARE BROTHER.

"I have received yours, without date, in which you tell me that Mr. Montagu has endeavoured to pervert you from your religion. I do not doubt that you remember very well the commands I left with you at my going away concerning that point, yet your letters which come from Paris say that it is the Queen's purpose to do all she can to change your religion, in which if you do hearken to her or anybody else in that matter you must never think to see England or me again, and whatsoever mischief shall fall on me or my affairs from this time I must lay all upon you as being the only cause of it. . . . If you do not consider what I say unto you, remember the last words of your dead father, which were to be constant to your religion and never to be shaken in it. Which, if you do not observe, this shall be the last time you shall hear from

"Deare brother,

"yo^r most affectionate brother,

"CHARLES, R."

Ormonde performed his difficult duty with great ability. Notwithstanding the most violent opposition from the

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Queen, Henrietta Maria, whose treatment of her poor little son almost amounted to cruelty, the Duke took the child under his own protection and conveyed him to Holland to his sister the Princess of Orange, finding the means of paying for the journey by pawning the last jewel left to him, his George, the insignia of the Order of the Garter, thus affording testimony to the bitter penury of the exiles.¹

Yet within a few months of this decisive action on the King's part, by which the attempt upon his brother's religious belief was frustrated, it is alleged that he himself made direct offers to the Pope of his own readiness to become a papist. In this case the facts to the contrary are clear. Being terribly in want of funds, at the instigation of the Duke of Newburgh, Charles commissioned his chamberlain, Lord Taafe, to approach the Papal Nuncio with a request for financial and political support, offering in return that, when restored to his throne, he would repeal the penal laws and, to the best of his ability and power, ameliorate the conditions of his Roman Catholic subjects. Almost simultaneously he issued a declaration to the Scotch Presbyterians expressing his own deep desire for religious toleration.²

Taaffe's propositions met with no practical response, and for a time the efforts of the Royalists in England absorbed the attention of both the King and his advisers. Contrary to the advice of Hyde, who clearly saw the futility of such efforts, several gentlemen, chiefly in the western counties, made an ill-arranged and premature attempt at rebellion, which though easily put down, yet produced after-effects little thought of by those unfortunates who suffered for their loyalty.³

Cromwell, to prevent the possible recurrence of such risings, instituted in every division of the country that government of military despotism by major-generals which,

¹ Ormonde, 163 *et passim*: Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. III., p. 258; Nicolas, 112; Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. V., p. 399.

² Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. V., p. 404; Acton, "Historical Essays"; Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. III., p. 291; Lingard, XI., p. 70, note.

³ Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. V., p. 406.

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by the anger it excited in the liberty-loving people of England, made the restoration of the legitimate monarch inevitable.

Charles, although convinced that this attempt of his followers must prove abortive, for a time removed to Middleburg, to be ready to take ship for England if necessary ; but when once more disappointed of his hopes he returned to his former domicile.

Later, Cromwell having formed an alliance with France and commenced hostilities against Spain, an opportunity arose of which Charles and his advisers took immediate advantage.

In the spring of 1656 he went secretly to Brussels for the purpose of negotiating, personally, a treaty with the Spanish minister, to whom he made the offer to transfer the Irish regiments from the service of France to that of Spain—a valuable consideration to the latter harassed Power—if in return he could be assured of immediate financial relief and the promise of military and political assistance when a favourable opportunity might arise for availing himself of such help.

During these negotiations the rumour of the King's conversion revived. Father Peter Talbot, a busy intriguing Irish priest, "who," Hyde wearily complains, "has been let loose on purpose to do us mischief," endeavoured to persuade Charles to declare himself a Roman Catholic and make an announcement of the fact to the Pope. Talbot held out the hope, in such a contingency, that a marriage might forthwith be effected with the Infanta of Spain, and thus the whole weight of that still powerful empire would be brought to bear in assisting the restoration of the King to the throne of Great Britain.¹

Again there is absolutely no evidence to show that Charles seriously considered such a proposition, and it is hardly conceivable that within twelve months of his impressing on his younger brother the irremediable mischief which such

¹ Clarendon, *State Papers*, Vol. III., p. 282 ; Clarendon, " *Rebellion*," Vol. VI., p. 16.

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a step would bring on the Royal cause, he should contemplate taking the same course himself. It must be remembered that the promulgation of these reports brought great advantage to the English Parliamentarians, and so they disseminated them with constant assiduity to the grave perturbation of Hyde and Nicolas, who urged the King's adherents to contradict such false rumours at every opportunity.

For a time the compact with Spain brought some measure of financial relief to Charles, though in another direction it was productive of considerable annoyance.¹

Cromwell and Mazarin, alarmed at the consequences which might ensue from a treaty binding on the aspirant to the British Crown and the Spanish Government, endeavoured to sow dissension between the King and his brother, the Duke of York, who, having served for many years in the French army, by the withdrawal of the Irish regiments lost his command and opportunities for distinction.

James, on receipt of the intelligence that the King required him to resign his commission and attend the court at Bruges, at first showed great disinclination to obey, but at length joined his brother, accompanied by Sir John Berkeley, who exercised great influence over him, in this case used to instigate the Duke to withstand the royal wishes.

Being commanded to discharge Berkeley from his household, James, always obstinate and wrong-headed, fled to Holland with the evident intention of re-entering the French service. At this "unimaginable sally," as Lord Bristol called it, Charles became extremely angry, and Cromwell in a letter to Mazarin with great satisfaction remarked: "The fire which is kindled between them will not now ask bellows to blow it or keep it burning."

Ormonde, the invaluable intermediary in all difficult matters, despatched by Charles to remonstrate with the runaway, executed his task with such address that James returned to Bruges, placated by the bestowal of a peerage

¹ Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. VI., p. 17.

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on his favourite, and himself eventually accepted a high command in the Spanish service.¹

The King, after some demur, persuaded the Spanish Viceroy Don John to allow him to take part also in the military operations, this being the first time such permission had been accorded during his exile.

The French subsidy being dropped when the arrangement with Spain was concluded, and the Spanish authorities, with their usual dilatoriness, delaying payment of the promised allowance, the position of Charles and his court became miserable in the extreme, the King and his household falling into abject poverty.

Extravagance of living could not be laid to their charge ; “ 4,000 pistoles will discharge the whole seven months board wages, pay all you owe here and supply such acts of bounty as you wish for the present,” writes Hyde, and such a sum can hardly be called excessive for the maintenance of the royal exile and also of his “ family,” or household, to use the present expression ; indeed, of the King himself the same correspondent soon declares : “ If he has not a very speedy supply, he must take horse and tell Don John he is plainly run away from starving and seeing his servants beg in the streets or be hauled to prison.”

That a genuine fear of the latter calamity existed another letter from Hyde shows : “ If Monsieur Ognati do not this day prevent it, poor Barton will be cast into prison for what he owes his landlord ” ; and the dignified Ormonde bitterly observes that they have fallen into great necessities, “ which as you know I never call so until there is nothing left to pawn for bread.”²

The soldiers of the Irish regiments in Spanish pay, which though promised they never received, wandered about the streets hungry and half-naked, reproaching those who led them into such straits, and the condition of all concerned fell to a depth of misery greater than at any time during their squalid experience.

¹ Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. III., pp. 319 *et passim*.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 294, 344, 355 *et passim*.

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Charles, by nature, was but ill equipped to endure such circumstances with dignity and temperance ; it is to be feared that he displayed neither quality. Stories of the dissolute indulgence and incontinence of himself and his household spread broadcast, of which Thurlow and his emissaries at that time, and writers of history later, made great use to bespatter Charles's reputation.¹

In many respects his conduct cannot be excused, but it is evident that though he used his low amusements to pass away the idle time, yet he fretted under the inactivity of his life.² It is probable that though he refused to go again to Scotland after his former experience there, he might have ventured into England, if the fact had not been pressed upon him continually by Hyde and Nicolas that the Royal cause depended entirely on his personal safety.

He learnt at Dunbar and Worcester the inferiority of the Scotch troops ; and the uncertainty of how great or how little support he would receive in England made him doubtful of the possibility of withstanding the power of Cromwell except with the help of trained soldiers, and the experience of seven weary years taught him the hopelessness, under present circumstances, of expecting such assistance from any European Power.

The permission to join the Spanish army and take part in its operations for a time broke through the evil atmosphere. Once in action he showed all the brightest and best qualities of his nature, as again he did in later life.

At the siege of Mardyke he behaved with great courage, advancing so near to the enemies' works that the Duke of Ormonde, in attendance, had his horse shot under him, an accident which, considering the short range of firearms in those days, shows that both Charles and his escort must have been in a position of some danger. "I am none of those who think that you can recover your three kingdoms without being in danger of your life, but let it be when the adventure is of use and there is a recompense in view.

¹ Clarendon. State Papers, Vol. III., p. 374.

² *Ibid.*, p. 351.

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Truly, Sir ! ” writes poor anxious old Hyde, “ you ought to have some compassion on our fears.”¹

Pressing on Don John the fulfilment of his promise of help, Charles received from the viceroy the information that he would not feel justified in lending his troops unless an assurance was given of substantial support from the Royalists in England.

Once more Ormonde came to the rescue and risked his life by venturing across the Channel, only to find the aspect of affairs hopeless to a degree, no spirit, no money and great fear of the terrible Protector.

With all prospect of military aid denied, with the Spanish subsidy falling more and more into arrears, with the starving regiments clamouring for bread and clothing, the prospect grew worse and worse.

Then at the darkest moment, a sudden gleam of light gave new spirit to the King and his followers ; “ Yesterday it pleased God out of His infinite goodness to do that which He would not allow any man the honour of doing, putting an end to the life of him under the might of whose tyranny these distressed kingdoms have groaned for years.”²

So ran the despatch : Cromwell was dead.

That wonderful personality, that arch-hypocrite, that stern creator of an army which, iron in discipline and callous from fanaticism, enabled him, the brewer of Huntingdon, to overrun the liberties of a free people more drastically than any crowned monarch ; to carry England’s empire beyond the seas ; to dictate terms to European potentates ; that incomprehensible man who, in the bitterness of her soul, the old Queen of Bohemia declared : “ Is the beast in the Revelations that all kings and nations do worship ” ;³ he was now no more than any other corpse.

No wonder the boys at the Hague danced in the streets, lighted bonfires and sang “ The devil is dead ; ” and the exiled and poverty-stricken Cavaliers “ felt their hearts, almost

¹ Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. III., p. 374.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. III., p. 407.

³ Evelyn, Vol. IV., p. 222.

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quite dead before, of a sudden wonderfully revived." And their spirits would have risen still higher and their hatred would almost have been gratified could they have looked into the future and seen the body of the great Protector, at first buried with royal honours in the sepulchre of English Sovereigns, then in three years' time hanging a loathsome mass from the gibbet at Tyburn; his name tabooed, his memory execrated, not a statue raised to his fame until, in the nineteenth century, a British Government, with a fine sense of incongruity, which nearly amounted to humour, erected an effigy to him in a submerged area at Westminster with its back turned to the House of Commons and its eyes stonily peering over a balustrade at Henry VII.'s Chapel, the last resting place of many of the Kings and Queens of England.

The hopes so wonderfully excited soon dropped and waned. Richard Cromwell, although he "sat like an ape on horseback" in his father's place, received support and allegiance from an apparently united party, and foreign courts conveyed to him their continued desire to remain on friendly terms. As subsequent events showed, the unanimity lay only on the surface; the Nemesis which so frequently visits usurpers began to work, to teach the world again that deep changes in the life of a people can never be effected only by the ascendancy of one individual, but, to be durable, must spring from the educated will of a nation.

Although for a time the older councillors of Charles lamented the lack of those advantages they hoped their master would gain from Cromwell's death, yet soon the foresight of Hyde, Colepepper, and others discerned opportunities which they believed, if wisely handled, might bring about the objects on which their hearts were set.

Colepepper, from his knowledge of the Parliamentary leaders, prophesied, as events proved rightly, the way by which the King's restoration could be effected; "the person that my eye is chiefly on as able alone to restore the King is Monck." He wrote from Amsterdam to Hyde, and the fact that Monck kept himself isolated from the Council of the

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new Protector and remained independent in his distant command added force to the prognostication.¹

Steps were taken to approach the General, and, while they proceeded, the efforts of King and councillors were devoted to restrain the more ardent and impatient spirits from making premature attempts which might ruin all. "The danger is very great that hot-headed men may gratify Mr. Thurlow with a plot" was the theme of all Hyde's discourses, while he and his colleagues laboured assiduously to reconcile to the idea of a Restoration in England men who held moderate opinions, and to persuade them to take part in the new Parliament which Richard felt constrained to call.²

To frustrate the scheme of the intriguing Jesuit, Peter Talbot, who, despairing of the conversion of Charles to Catholicism, now strove to induce the Royalists to substitute James in the place of his brother as an aspirant to the throne, Hyde used every effort to win to the King's side the moderate Presbyterians, for this purpose writing letters and issuing declarations affirming that the King "did and would continue in professing and practising the Protestant religion."³

The Royalists also revised and strengthened their organisation, new committees, consisting of the most trustworthy members of the party and called the "Old Knot," being created in the hopes of maintaining better secrecy in their designs.⁴

Moreover, once for all, Charles, at Hyde's suggestion, refused all communications with Sexby and the Levellers, who, out of hatred to Cromwell and his adherents, strove for some time past to effect an alliance with the Royalists.

The abdication of Richard, the utter confusion into which the country fell, demonstrated to many Presbyterians, even to those who followed Oliver when alive, the impossibility of continuing the present situation, and on all sides came

¹ Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. III., pp. 411, 412.

² *Ibid.*, p. 463.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 459.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 466, 470.

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entreaties to the King to make some definite attempt at regaining his throne.

First it was necessary to arouse the energy of the old Royalists, who seemed sunk in lethargy. "Of all the parties in England, the King's is truly the largest and the most indifferent," wrote Mordaunt, a zealous though new adherent; then he added; "The most reserved of the prudential men now own it is high time we were better prepared." ¹

The divisions in the army, the financial distress of Parliament, combined to stimulate the courage of the active spirits, and in July steps were taken for initiating a general insurrection, while Charles went secretly to Calais to be ready to cross the Channel at a propitious moment and head his followers.

Again the traitor Willis, who contrived to remain a member of the "Old Knot," betrayed the secret to Thurlow, with the result that Booth's rising proved unsuccessful and, in addition, nearly brought a most serious disaster upon the cause by involving in the abortive attempt Admiral Montagu, who, secretly favouring the Royal hopes, without orders sailed his ships to England with the intention of participating in the proposed struggle.

Montagu, with great coolness, declared that want of provisions caused this movement; the Parliamentary leaders, not daring to supersede him, accepted the explanation and thus the Royal schemes escaped a vital blow.

As it was, a deep depression fell on all Charles's friends. "You must not expect any more risings," wrote a dejected adherent to Hyde; "all our hopes are from abroad, which are but small considering how the Spaniard uses you, the French betray you and the Dutch already declare against you." ²

One chance still remained; the great Turenne, an ardent well-wisher, promised Charles that if any further aid could be obtained from any quarter he would lend the help of his

¹ Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. III., pp. 460 *et passim*.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. III., p. 546. Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. VI., p. 38.

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own veteran regiment, 1,200 strong, and would pawn his plate to provide funds so that a fresh attack might be made.¹

The Prime Ministers of France (Mazarin) and of Spain (Don Luis di Haro) were preparing a solemn conclave at Fontarabia for the purpose of negotiating the Treaty of the Pyrenees. To them forthwith Charles journeyed in the hope of winning their co-operation.

Every chronicler speaks of his conduct on this occasion with praise, his adroitness and diplomatic talent earning wide-spread approval. "All his councillors could not deliver his business better or add a word to what he says," writes O'Neile; and Hyde, never very eulogistic, also supplied a note of commendation.

Yet all proved vain; neither the successful Mazarin nor the disappointed Don Luis di Haro considered it advisable to interfere in the internal affairs of a neighbouring kingdom, and Charles returned from his adventure having gained nothing, except a gift from the Spanish court of 7,000 gold pistoles, which barely paid the expenses of the journey.²

The Republican Government appeared to be firmly established and prosperous, both at home and abroad, when the bolt, foreseen by Colepepper, fell.

Attempts had been made, for some time past, on the fidelity of Monck; brilliant offers reached him through the medium of a certain Dr. Clarges, the brother of the lady who occupied in the General's household successively the posts of his laundress, his mistress, his wife and his duchess.

No answers were returned by the inscrutable General, but at last he began his march southward.

The story of the Restoration has been told in the portentous sentences of Clarendon and the lucid epigrams of Guizot, to which nothing need be added; as matters progressed Charles, "who had an imagination rather than an expectation" that the actions of Monck would turn to his advantage, watched every opportunity for assisting and facilitating the movement.

¹ Guizot, "Richard Cromwell," Vol. I., p. 203; James' "Life," p. 377.

² Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. III., p. 597.

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He left Brussels for Antwerp hurriedly on a rumour, doubtless well founded, that the Spanish authorities desired to detain him, and also because representations were made that it would be wise to flatter the religious susceptibilities of the English people by issuing all necessary proclamations from the territory of the Protestant States of Holland rather than from a portion of the possessions of Spain, a Power of pronounced papist proclivities.¹

Taking up his abode at Breda, Charles, seeing the favourable moment had arrived, despatched Sir John Grenville to England with three documents, one to Monck, to be communicated by him to the Army, one to the Speaker of the House of Commons, and the third, the celebrated Declaration of Breda, "To all our loving subjects of what degree or quality soever, Greeting."

With this Declaration of Breda began that policy which, initiated by the toleration of Charles and the far-seeing wisdom of Hyde, contributed so largely to the peaceful restoration of the monarchy in England; to a breach of that policy, effected by the same minister and unwillingly permitted by the King, may be traced much of the discontent which troubled the middle of Charles's reign, and to the reversal of that policy James owed the downfall of himself and his dynasty.

To Hyde's acumen may be attributed the master-thought of leaving to the discretion of Parliament the two thorny questions of the grace and favour to be extended to those who committed offences against the King and his murdered father, and the legality of the grants and purchases of estates confiscated by Cromwell or the Parliament; but, though it would be ridiculous to ascribe to Charles any highly conscientious motive in granting toleration to his people, yet he may fairly be credited with the following declaration, which would strongly commend itself to his merciful easy disposition as well as to the distinctly non-rigid views he held on religious subjects: "We do declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted

¹ Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. VI., p. 225.

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or called in question for differences of opinion in matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom.”¹

On Tuesday, the 8th May, the two Houses of Parliament themselves proclaimed Charles king by inherent birthright and lawful undoubted succession; they voted him the sum of £50,000, with £10,000 to the Duke of York and £5,000 to the Duke of Gloucester; while the City of London, the Army and the Navy acclaimed the decision with apparent unanimity.

The Houses decided to send a commission to present their reply to his Majesty's gracious communication; the choice, however, of the emissaries from the Commons caused great controversy, as so many members, now effusively loyal, wished to make the personal acquaintance of their Sovereign. “I gave in the names of twelve enemies,” wrote Broderick to Hyde, “whose absence would have greatly availed us, as besides the possibility that they may return friends through the King's great mastery over men;”—a spontaneous tribute to Charles's fascination of manner, more eloquent than the compliments of any courtier.²

The eighteen commissioners—six from the Lords, twelve from the Commons—sailed to Breda in Admiral Montagu's fleet, which remained there in order to escort the Sovereign back to his people. Soon afterward Sir John Grenville also joined his Majesty, bringing with him the welcome supply of £4,000 in gold, which Charles, who had not seen so much money for many a long day, with schoolboy glee showed to his sister, the Princess of Orange, as it lay shining in his portmanteau, and then proceeded to pay the “board wages of his household, now much in arrear.”³

The town clerk and several aldermen of the City of London quickly followed, as did also a deputation of six prominent Presbyterian preachers, whose support at that time would prove invaluable, and who journeyed thus far to express the

¹ Clarendon, “Rebellion,” Vol. VI., p. 232; Journals of Lords and Commons, Pepys, 4th May, 1660.

² Clarendon, “Rebellion,” Vol. VI., p. 259; Clarendon, State Papers, Vol. III., p. 739.

³ Pepys, 16th May, 1660.

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loyalty of themselves and their congregations and to beg for liberty of conscience, when "His Majesty gave such encouraging promises of peace as raised some of them to high expectation."

Charles gained so great popularity with these divines as to prompt the author of one of the many libels on him to relate a story that, when the deputation waited on the King, Mr. Case, the most reverend of all the number, being ushered into a room next to the King's closet, "was told without that the King was busie at his devotions. Being thus left alone (by contrivance noe doubt) and hearing the sound of groaning piety, such was the curiosity of Mr. Case that he must needs go and lay his ear to the closet door. Heavens ! how was the good old man ravished to hear the pious ejaculations that fell from the King's lips."¹ Then follows a prayer that his Majesty might be given a constant heart to follow the Protestant religion and to respect the tender consciences of those who are not free to conform to "outward and indifferent ceremonies." While, doubtless, the attack is intended to draw attention to the hypocrisy of the King, it is interesting to observe that the writer, apparently, is oblivious of the fact that he, at the same time, is portraying one of the shining lights of Nonconformity applying his ear to the crack and, possibly, his eye to the keyhole of the door of his Sovereign's privy apartment, a practice hardly worthy of commendation even in a determined foe to prelacy and papacy.

Loaded with favours by the States of Holland, surrounded by a brilliant cavalcade, Charles made a triumphal entry into the Hague on the 15th May, 1660, where he received the parliamentary commission, who laid before him the invitation of the two Houses to return to his kingdom. On the 23rd May he embarked on board the *Naseby*, an ill-omened name, quickly changed to that of the *Royal Charles*, the flagship of Admiral Montagu, and set sail for his native land after an exile of fifteen years, amid thunderous salutes from the ships, everyone joining in the welcome, even Pepys, whose

¹ "Secret History," 1690.

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ardour caused him to fire off a gun, "whereby I nearly spoiled my right eye."

Many Royalists half-delirious with joy filled the vessels, as Lady Fanshaw relates ; boats hurried backwards and forwards across the calm sea from ship to ship conveying greetings and congratulations. All were excited and triumphant, but Charles in characteristic careless fashion, before landing, ate his breakfast, "there being set some ship's dyet before them, only to show the manner of the ship's dyet, they did eat of nothing else but pease and pork and boiled beef."¹ It is possible that a desire to win the hearts of the sailors, as well as the robust appetite which once before so annoyed Mademoiselle de Montpensier, may have accounted for this act.

With exuberant and general joy the English people received their King, a joy so apparent, so genuine and universal, that Charles with happy wit exclaimed : "I doubt not it has been my own fault that I was absent so long, for I see no one who does not profess that he ever wished for my return."²

Received by Monck with the most obsequious deference, which the King repaid with loudly expressed words of gratitude, surrounded by the nobility and gentry of the surrounding counties and the Mayor and Corporation of Dover, Charles landed, and after remaining some time in that town, as it did not contain sufficient accommodation for his suite, went on to Canterbury.

Here he wrote a letter to "my deare, deare" sister Henriette, telling her the events of the day and how "my head is so dreadfully stunned with the acclamations of the people and the vast amount of business, that I do not know whether I am writing sense or nonsense."³

Leaving Canterbury by way of Rochester, the King continued his triumphal progress to his capital, which he entered, a bloodless conqueror, on the 29th May and received the homage of Parliament. If the reports speak truly,

¹ Pepys, 22nd May, 25th May, 1660.

² Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. VI., p. 264.

³ "Madame" (Mrs. Henry Ady), p. 56.

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he spent the night, the first of his arrival at his palace, in the house of Sir Samuel Morland and by the side of his mistress, Barbara Villiers, afterwards Lady Castlemaine.

It would be unnecessary to mention such an episode, were it not that, almost without exception, writers on Charles II. adduce this incident as a mark of his innately corrupt and immoral mind, and, perhaps unconsciously, colour from it his subsequent conduct as hypocritical and false.

To those who dispassionately study human nature such conclusions appear somewhat illogical. An analysis of the life of Charles, as indeed of that of many other human beings, shows that the physical and the mental qualities frequently conflicted.

The tenacity of his purpose in political matters contrasted sharply with the laxity of his private occupations. Even on this occasion, after passing through a long period of most trying emotions, after dealing with many men and conciliating many motives, weary and fatigued almost to exhaustion, he yet finds time to write a charming letter to his favourite sister; and again after a second and similar ordeal he seeks solace with his mistress, a course of conduct which gives a valuable insight into the contradictory nature of the man, and bears out the contention that those who judge that nature from the animal instincts alone are far from forming a genuine estimate of his real character.

Honours now fell thickly on those three men to whom Charles mainly owed his restoration to his kingdom. On Monck, the general of the Army which made the event possible, on Montague, the admiral of the Navy without whose co-operation the action of the military force would have been futile, the King on his landing conferred the Order of the Garter,¹ while, a few weeks later, the first became Duke of Albemarle, Captain-General of the Forces and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland with large pay and emoluments, while the latter was created Earl of Sandwich and Admiral of the Narrow Seas.²

¹ Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. VI., p. 264; Pepys, 10th July, 1660.

² "Parliamentary History," Vol. IV., p. 82.



GENERAL MONCK.
From the Painting in Exeter Guildhall.

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Hyde, already titular Lord Chancellor, became the recipient of all the patronage and pay of that important post, and the most influential minister of the Crown; he was called to the House of Lords as Baron Hyde, and, on the occasion of the coronation, rose to the rank of Earl of Clarendon, the name by which he is known among the Englishmen who may be justly included in the list of great statesmen.

But amid all the rejoicing and splendour of the coronation, those who looked beneath the surface saw that much must be done to the foundation of the monarchy before it could be made secure.

The material wants of the King and his establishment reflected the disrepair of the body politic.

Not only did the King and his attendants lack everything, "their clothes not being worth forty shillings the best of them,"¹ but the royal palaces in England were stripped of necessary furniture and fittings; bedding, bed linen, table linen, plate, and all the appurtenances of a household being deficient; moreover investigations by a committee were necessary to discover, if possible, what had become of the Crown robes, sceptre and jewels. As apparently these could not easily be found, new robes and ermines and a crown and sceptre were provided at the charge of £900.²

All this cost money, and money was not easy to come by. Even the donation of £500 voted by the House to Sir John Grenville could not be paid by the Treasury, but came from the pocket of a private member, Mr. Forth; and the City of London found some difficulty in supplying the Commons with the £65,000 presented as a gift to the King and his brothers.

In reality the country, ground down by the heavy expenditure of Cromwell on the Army and Navy which maintained him in power, lay on the verge of bankruptcy.

In addition to the difficulty of administration, once the ebullition of joy subsided, the fundamental differences of

¹ Pepys, 16th May, 1660.

² "Parliamentary History," Vol. VI., p. 40.

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thought and policy which existed in the nation quickly reappeared.

The day of his arrival afforded Charles a taste of the troubles to come ; he spent hours, in private audiences, listening to a recital of the services, real or pretended, rendered by his friends, and then immediately afterwards Monck presented him with a list of some seventy persons, the most fit to form the Privy Council, among whom appeared the names of only two undiluted Royalists, the Marquis of Hertford and the Earl of Southampton, the remainder being pronounced Presbyterians or prominent members of the Long Parliament.¹

By the display of some diplomacy in fulfilling the private desires of the General, by appointing his confidant Morrice, a Presbyterian but otherwise a nonentity, Secretary of State, Charles managed to form a Council fairly representative of the diverse sections which composed the nation ; and by the ingenuity of Hyde, who recommended the appointment of a Committee of Foreign Affairs, or Cabinet, as it would now be called, consisting of himself, Ormonde, Southampton, Monck, Nicolas and Morrice, a workable administration was formed.

Thanks to the far-seeing wisdom of Hyde, who, in the Declaration of Breda, referred the question of indemnity or otherwise to Parliament, the responsibility of determining what course should be pursued towards those who drove his father from his throne did not rest on Charles's shoulders.

With regard to his father's murderers no doubt existed—on them well-deserved punishment must fall ; but to others a general pardon had been promised “excepting such persons as shall be excepted by Parliament.” Dealing with this question the House of Commons named seven of the regicides to be excluded from all hope of mercy, and commanded the surrender of all the late King's judges within fourteen days. Nineteen of these obeying, the remainder, who failed to appear, were also excluded, and the names of

¹ Clarendon, “Life,” Vol. II., p. 10.

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Vane, Lambert and Lenthall added to the list of those to be punished otherwise than by death.

But the Lords largely increased the roll of the condemned, and would have dealt out drastic justice to all who sat in judgment, not only on the murdered King, but on any Royalist who suffered during the Protectorate.

To his infinite credit Charles exerted all his power and persuasion in the direction of mercy. He begged the Lords to help him in the performance of the promise of pardon "which," as he significantly remarks, "if I had not made I am persuaded neither I nor you had been now here. I know there are some men who could neither forgive themselves or be forgiven by us, and I thank you for your justice towards those the immediate murderers of my father, and I will deal truly with you, I never thought of excepting any other. . . . Therefore I do earnestly desire and conjure you to depart from all particular animosity and revenge or memory of past provocation and that you will pass this Act without other exception than those who were immediately guilty of that murder of my father."¹

The Lords yielded to the King's wise and merciful words and amended their resolution. For fifteen years the country had lain under Cromwell's iron rule ; in the same period the defeated Cavaliers saw their King murdered in a manner which outraged every instinct of their loyalty ; they themselves in their own persons suffered death, imprisonment, ignominy and penury ; in nearly every nation of Europe the abrupt reversal of such a state of affairs would have produced a holocaust of victims. To the moderation and the mercy of Charles the people owed the fact that only fourteen lives, all of them men who committed unforgiveable offences, were sacrificed. Well, indeed, might Evelyn say of the Restoration, in spirit if not in fact : "I blessed God for all this was done without one drop of blood shed."²

That Charles personally contributed to this commendable state of affairs is shown by his action in directing the Chan-

¹ "Parliamentary History," 27th July, 1660, Vol. IV., p. 89.

² Evelyn, Diary, Vol. VII., p. 355.

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cellor to stay any further proceedings of the Lords against the regicides and to leave the accusations idle on the table of the House : " Let them lie there, you know I cannot pardon them, I am weary of hanging except for new offences." ¹

In one instance only he showed sternness. When the question arose of excepting Sir Harry Vane, he wrote to Clarendon, as Hyde had then become : " He is too dangerous a man to live if we can honestly put him out of the way " ; and Vane thereupon was tried and executed for High Treason in June, 1662. ²

In this case, as in that of Lord Russell, Charles followed the instincts of self-preservation, and only those who are biassed by attachment to the political principles for which both victims suffered will blame him for his action.

On the 30th December—a solemn fast and day of humiliation for the sins of the people—the bodies of Cromwell, Bradshaw and Ireton were dragged from their tombs in Westminster Abbey, hanged on the gallows at Tyburn, and then buried in a deep pit near to the common place of execution, thousands of people " who had seen them in their pride being spectators." *Sic transit gloria mundi.* ³

At the end of the year 1660 the Convention Parliament, which completed the entire reversal of the work of Cromwell and his assistants, came to an end by its own decree. Charles, who, though he owned many talents yet totally lacked knowledge of the administration of public affairs, owed to Clarendon the advice and guidance which led to this decision. The assembly, which gained its existence from its own act and not by the King's writ, by dissolving itself bore testimony to its own abnormal birth, but the summoning of the Houses of Lords and Commons, according to ancient usage and with the usual procedure, demonstrated to the nation a return to the old constitutional custom.

The new Parliament met on the 8th May, 1661. It first proceeded to confirm the authority of its predecessors and

¹ Clarendon, State Papers, Supplement, p. 46.

² Harris, Vol. V., p. 32.

³ Evelyn, Diary, Vol. I., p. 364.

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to give legal sanction to all such acts as were necessary for the welfare of the people, but which, being passed by the Long Parliament and not receiving any Royal Assent, were consequently null and void. By this measure all civil marriages became valid from the year 1642 to 1661; the Navigation Act, greatly conducive to the welfare of the State, the abolition of the Court of Wards and of knights' service, the last remnant of feudal tenure, also became the law of the land.

The House of Commons voted a revenue of £1,200,000 to the King for the maintenance of the dignity of the Crown and the safety of the nation, and when, owing as aforesaid to the critical financial position of the country, the actual revenue fell far short of the estimated yield, it supplemented the amount by an increase of the excise and the imposition of a hearth tax.¹

A question of great difficulty yet required solution. The settlement of the land constituted a problem of immense importance. By fines and confiscation the Commonwealth deprived many of the Royalists of their estates, whole or in part. Those who suffered thus for their King demanded the restitution of their property, and the impossibility of entirely meeting their wishes created thus early a strong feeling against the Government.

But in many respects Charles and his advisers met the difficulty with fairness and sagacity. The Crown lands, the jointure of the Queen Mother, and the estates of certain prominent noblemen were restored in entirety, and all lands confiscated by the Commonwealth Government reverted to their former owners, thus enabling the landed aristocracy of the country to regain much of its former position and influence.²

In the only parallel history affords of such events, the restoration of the French Monarchy in 1814, the problem differed in the fundamental respect that, while in England in 1661 the bulk of the land went in large parcels from one

¹ "Parliamentary History," Vol. IV., pp. 211 *et passim*.

² Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 184; Kennet's "Register," p. 312.

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proprietor to another, in France the confiscated territories of the *noblesse* became, in the majority of cases, the property of the peasant who lived on the soil and gained his livelihood by tilling it.

To have replaced these occupiers by the original proprietors would have disturbed a large proportion of the population, while on the other hand, as actually occurred, to refrain from reinstating the old landlords destroyed once and for all that ancient and hereditary aristocracy on whose support and allegiance the monarchy largely depended. The restored Bourbons perforce abandoned the *noblesse* and the monarchy fell; the restored Stuarts found a different solution of the problem, consequently, through many difficulties and many vicissitudes, the British Constitution still consists of King, Lords and Commons.

One important change Parliament had already effected. To the infinite relief of the nation a resolution passed the Commons in August, 1660, confirming the report of the Lord General Monck recommending the disbandment of the Army and Navy. For this purpose a sum approaching £850,000 was appropriated, and before twelve months elapsed that wonderful instrument which enabled Oliver Cromwell to become the autocrat of England ceased to exist.¹

As these changes took place and as the people became accustomed to the re-established order of things and found the benefit of a freer and less rigid government, the old divisions of opinion flowed in different channels.

To the political antagonism the religious succeeded: the nation no longer consisted of Cavaliers and Roundheads; the Puritan attacked not the malignant but the Churchman; the Cavalier scorned and threatened not the cropped Roundhead but the canting Nonconformist.

In fact the question anticipated by Charles and Hyde at Breda now became a burning controversy and remained so to the end of the Stuart dynasty.

During the Commonwealth the attitude of Cromwell towards ecclesiastical matters consisted of a policy of

¹ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 105; "Parliamentary History," Vol. IV., p. 115.

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spoliation tempered by toleration. The Church lands to the value of £2,400,000 were annexed by the State, the bishops were dispossessed of their sees, while the parish clergy suffered many hardships and were obliged to leave their livings. Charles, in the Declaration of Breda, promised full liberty for tender consciences, and in so doing he was absolutely and completely sincere. It is evident from his conduct throughout his reign that he wished to establish a genuine toleration of all religious opinion, and it is equally evident that neither Clarendon nor the Presbyterians entertained any intention of permitting such a movement.

Clarendon from the first showed his determination to re-establish the Church of England in all its power and prerogative; the leaders of the Presbyterians evinced a disposition to accept this, providing that such alterations were made in ritual and Church government as might meet the views of those who owned scrupulous consciences.¹

That the bishops must resume their seats was evident to all.

De Cominges, the new French ambassador—who took the place of Bordeaux, removed at the special request of Charles—might exclaim with true orthodox horror that none of the British bishops were of noble birth, that they all were married, with large families: “*Vidi episcopum et episcopam, episcopulos et episcopulas*”; but to the average Englishman the destruction of the Bench of Bishops inflicted almost as severe a shock as the deposition of the King.

The restoration of the monarchy entailed the restoration of the episcopacy, to which no opposition was expected from the Presbyterians who followed Baxter, Calamy and their colleagues.

The plan which appeared to commend itself most to all parties consisted of the scheme put forward by Archbishop Usher, who proposed that the bishop should not be the lord over subordinates but the first among equals, and should in all acts of ecclesiastical government be associated with a synod.

¹ Clarendon, “*Rebellion*,” Vol. VI., p. 262; Clarendon, “*Life*,” Vol. II., p. 280.

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Charles granted the chief Presbyterians a personal audience, and addressed them to such purpose that "old Mr. Ash burst out into tears of joy." Dr. Reynolds, Dr. Manton, Messrs. Case, Baxter and Calamy received appointments as chaplains in ordinary to his majesty, which pleased Baxter sufficiently to cause him to print in the volume of his "Life" the certificate of his office, although he is careful to explain that neither he nor the others ever received or expected a penny of the salaries of their places.¹

Later on the bishopric of Hereford was offered to him, that of Coventry and Lichfield to Calamy, that of Norwich to Reynolds. Only the latter accepted the dignity; but Baxter distinctly states that private reasons, and not any objection to a moderate episcopacy, prevented him personally from so doing—indeed he expressly declares that the scheme for the comprehension of Presbyterians and Churchmen put forward by the King and embodied in his declaration "was (though not such as we desired) yet such as any honest sober minister might submit to."²

Nevertheless the whole negotiation came to nothing, for when the House of Commons debated the Bill embodying the proposals of the King's declaration, after some discussion in which Sir Clement Throckmorton declared that the proposed agreement would make the bishops "*vox et pretereā nihil*," the House rejected the motion by 183 to 157.³

In pursuance of his promise to convene a meeting between the Anglican and the Presbyterian Churches, Charles in March called together a conference at the Savoy, consisting of twelve bishops and twelve pronounced "dissenting brethren," assisted by eighteen clergy of lesser rank, to discuss what alteration, if any, should be made in the Liturgy, so as to ensure the comprehension of the Presbyterians in a united Church.

Charles himself attended the first meeting, over which

¹ Baxter, "Life," pp. 229, 232.

² *Ibid.*, p. 279.

³ "Parliamentary History," Vol. IV., p. 152.

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Sheldon, Bishop of London and, on the death of Juxon, Archbishop of Canterbury, presided.

Dr. Cosins, an eloquent orator, and Morley, Bishop of Worcester, a great authority on Church history—who being asked by an earnest inquirer, “What, my Lord, do the Arminians hold?” tersely replied, “Most of the bishoprics and all the best deaneries in England”—were the chief advocates for the Church, while Baxter, of necessity, and Bates represented the views of the Presbyterians.

As perhaps might have been expected from an assembly composed entirely of theologians, little or no results accrued from their lengthy deliberations. Sheldon, with much worldly wisdom, insisted that all the demands of the Non-conformists should be presented at once; when in response to his request a long series of requirements, including one for an entirely new Liturgy, was laid before the conference, the length and stringency of the alterations suggested alarmed the meeting and rendered it but little disposed towards an amicable arrangement, as Sheldon expected and probably hoped.

Baxter and Gunning, afterwards Bishop of Chichester, commenced the discussion with great learning and at interminable length. Nine points of controversy were advanced; the convention broke up on the first—the necessity of kneeling at the celebration of the Holy Communion—and totally failed to come to any arrangement whatsoever.¹

During the conference at the Savoy the election for the new Parliament took place and, in the then state of enthusiastic rejoicing, resulted in the return of a House of Commons almost entirely composed of ardent Royalists and members of the Church of England.

Under any circumstances their attachment to the Crown would have been profound, but early in the year an incident occurred which not only increased their allegiance but also excited their alarm.

Spontaneous as the Restoration appeared, yet considerable latent discontent was known to exist among the more

¹ Kennet's “Register,” pp. 398, 505, 506; Neal's “History,” p. 299.

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advanced fanatics who professed views subversive of all regular government.

In January, 1661, some Fifth Monarchy men, as they were called, enthusiasts who expected a reign of saints on earth, which should bind kings in chains and nobles in links of iron, led by a wine-cooper named Venner, broke out into rebellion, traversed the City of London, routed those of the trained bands who opposed them, and excited general disturbance and alarm.

Withdrawing to Caen Wood, near Highgate, they were followed by such forces as could be drawn together and, after some fighting, were either killed or captured.

The outbreak in itself was not important, but it aroused considerable disquietude as showing how completely the country lay at the mercy of any organised band which might appear, and it afforded Charles an opportunity he earnestly sought of forming the nucleus of a standing army.¹

When, therefore, by direction of Parliament those forces under whose tyranny the country so long had groaned were paid off and disbanded, the King re-enlisted Monck's own regiment, called the Coldstreamers, and formed them into a body of infantry for the protection of the royal person and household, while at the same time some carefully selected squadrons of cavalry were retained, the newly organised levies becoming the Companies of the Guards and the Gentlemen of the Life Guards, from which, as time went on, grew those distinguished troops known as the Household Brigade and the Household Cavalry.²

Alarmed at the rising of the sectaries, flushed with loyal ardour and remembering with indignation the injuries inflicted on the English Church during the Commonwealth, the new Parliament met on the 8th May, 1661, in no humour for temporising or conciliation.

It required all the royal influence to induce the Houses to pass the Bill of Indemnity and Oblivion³—indemnity for

¹ Pepys, 9th January, 1661; Clarendon, "Life," p. 135.

² Fortescue, "History of the British Army."

³ Kennet's "Register," p. 562.

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the King's enemies and oblivion for his friends, caustic spirits designated it—but neither the Lords nor Commons showed the least inclination to smooth the path of the Presbyterians or to include those holding such opinions in one great national Church, sufficiently elastic in its constitution to comprise many shades of religious opinions.

The bishops were reinstated and took their seats once more in the House of Lords on the 20th November, 1661,¹ and then, if not at Clarendon's instigation at all events with his tacit approval, the House of Commons next proceeded in a direction distinctly opposed to religious conciliation.

Three measures were introduced and passed, all tending to reinstate the Church of England in its old position of unquestioned power and supremacy. A registering Bill for the supervision of printing and the press, by which the issue of all publications would be controlled by the Crown, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London; the Corporation Act, which compelled, without distinction, holders of municipal offices to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, to renounce the Covenant and to solemnly swear to the doctrine of the non-resistance to royal authority under all and any circumstances. This measure directly struck at the Presbyterians, whose chief strength lay in the cities, boroughs, and urban corporations.²

The third and most far-reaching measure dealt a crushing blow to all who did not subscribe to the doctrine and observance of the Church of England. By the Act of Uniformity Parliament decreed that the Prayer Book should be revised and its use made compulsory in every church, chapel and place of public worship throughout the realm. All holders of livings not already in Anglican orders must receive episcopal ordination and make a declaration of unfeigned consent to that which the Prayer Book contained.

Although in one particular—the insertion of the collect for the conversion of unbelievers—the revised book included an

¹ Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., pp. 179, 261.

² "Parliamentary History," Vol. IV., pp. 227, 233; Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 280.

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alteration suggested by the Presbyterians, yet nearly all the other emendations, some 600 in number, tended to make the acceptance more difficult and less palatable to Baxter and his followers; and as it was further declared that all who did not comply with the provisions of the Act, by the 24th August, 1662 (St. Bartholomew's Day), must vacate their livings, a serious condition of religious unrest arose.

22 Nearly 1,200 ministers conscientiously refused to accept ordination or take the oaths under the Act, and rather than do so vacated their livings on the appointed day.

Since teachers were also included among those who must accept the Liturgy and the oath of non-resistance, the deprived clergy found great difficulty in earning subsistence for themselves, their wives and families, severe hardships being inflicted on a body of law-abiding and most reputable men.¹

So far from uniformity in the religious life of the people of England being produced by this Act of Parliament, it created a chasm which to this day has not been bridged over. From the passing of this Act the nation became divided into two great controversial bodies, Churchmen and Nonconformists, who, embittered by differences of opinion, have often since vied with each other in demonstrating how men professing the same Christian religion may endeavour to advance Christianity by the most unchristian conduct towards those whose thoughts and convictions have a different trend.

For the policy of Parliament and its unfortunate results in no way can Charles II. be blamed. He sincerely desired a genuine toleration of all religious creeds which were not harmful to the national welfare. It is true that when he found both Presbyterians and Anglicans were united on the point of refusing religious liberty to anybody but themselves, his interest in the consultations between these two bodies waned and he took no further steps to bring about a coalition, but, as all his words and actions show, he hoped and desired

¹ Lord's Journal; Baxter's "Life," p. 431; Neal's "History," Vol. IV., p. 376.

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that the freedom they sought themselves they would be wide-minded enough to extend to others.¹

By the Declaration of Breda he promised that no man should be called in question for a peaceful profession of his creed whatsoever it might be ; by his treaty with Spain he pledged himself to ameliorate the condition of those of his subjects who were Roman Catholics. If he felt pledged to give liberty of conscience to the Presbyterians who assisted him in regaining his kingdom, he at least owed equal obligation to the Roman Catholics who preserved his life.²

It seems probable that at this time Charles contemplated some vague ill-defined scheme by which he could evolve not only toleration, but a wide national Church, which would include within its limits all who consented to be controlled by episcopal government in religious affairs. His declaration concerning the comprehension of the Presbyterians delimited, in a certain degree, one side of his plan ; the errand of Sir Richard Bellings to the Pope, a year later, shows the other.

In this mission Charles laid certain propositions before his Holiness which, broadly speaking, suggested that the English Communion should become the Anglican portion of the Roman see, the Archbishop of Canterbury being the pontifical legate ; the mass, altered in some respects, to be said in the vulgar tongue ; the laity to be permitted to communicate in both kinds, bread and wine, and some less essential points to be also conceded. Needless to say the Pope refused to consider these proposals, but the fact that the project could in no possible manner commend itself to the supreme Pontiff does not detract from the possibility of Charles entertaining the idea.³

This design, it is true, ran counter to certain fundamental dogmas of Roman Catholicism. It passed by, as matters easy of settlement, such questions as the re-ordination of

¹ Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 300 ; Neal's "History," Vol. IV., p. 289.

² Clarendon, "Rebellion," Vol. VI., p. 232.

³ Acton, "Historical Essays," p. 96 ; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1885 ; "Boero, Istoria della Conversione di Carlo II.," Hallam, Vol. II., p. 463 ; Dalrymple, p. 49.

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the bishops and clergy, the saying of the mass in English, and other points of controversy which had and have proved insoluble ; but to one of Charles's speculative and cynical frame of mind it would appear absurd that a scheme, which offered many material advantages, should be cast aside for reasons which he would regard as of little practical importance.

The evidence with regard to this mission is uncertain and not above suspicion, but the project is one which might commend itself to Charles. It is a mistake to consider him as an infidel ; it is an equal mistake to believe that he took no interest in religious matters. Ormonde declares that the King " had a sense of religion," and during his stay in Paris he frequently discussed theological points with Mons. d'Olier, the principal of the Jesuit College.¹ Burnet gives a hint of this scheme when he writes about a proposition to have " none but secular priests tolerated in England who must be under a bishop and under an established government," and further suggests that Cardinal de Retz privately advised the King on the matter.²

In September, 1660, Henrietta Maria and her youngest daughter, Henriette, returned to this country ; the Queen Mother, among other reasons, coming here for the purpose of assisting in marrying one son and unmarried the other.

The Princess of Orange visiting Paris in 1658, took with her as maid of honour, Anne Hyde, the eldest daughter of the Lord Chancellor.

About this lady's charms opinions differ ; Grammont, with French politeness, writes that she has " l'air grand, la taille assez belle et beaucoup d'esprit " ; while Pepys, with true British bluntness, remarks : " She was a plain woman like her mother "—a somewhat unnecessary reference to the doctrine of heredity.³

Anyhow, plain or pretty, the young lady attracted the notice of James, Duke of York, who paid her attentions so

¹ Ormonde, p. 255 ; Acton, p. 96.

² Burnet, Vol. I., p. 133.

³ Grammont, p. 110 ; Pepys, 20th April, 1661.

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intimate as, after some months, to involve certain consequences. James proposed to make the lady his wife ; but by this time the Restoration had taken place, and the marriage of the brother of the King to a commoner opened a prospect full of difficulty and complication.

Several intimate friends of the Duke, notably Sir Charles Berkeley, endeavoured to change his intention by alleging that they all at various times shared the favours of the lady, and Berkeley even offered, under the circumstances, to marry her.¹

These allegations were made not, as some writers assert, for the purpose of destroying the character of an innocent woman, but in the hopes of preventing the heir apparent to the throne from contracting an alliance which might prove most detrimental not only to himself individually, but to the maintenance of the Crown to which possibly he might succeed.

The effort failed ; James consulted his brother, the King, who, tersely observing that as he had brewed so he must drink, gave the royal consent to the marriage.² Probably Charles took this course being very loth to cast any slight or dishonour on the statesman to whom he owed so much ; but the Queen Mother, who always disliked Clarendon, at the news of the betrothal hastened over to England to use her influence in stopping a match derogatory to her family pride.

Nevertheless, thanks to the good offices of the King, the marriage took place on the 3rd September, 1660, at Worcester House in the Strand, the residence of the bride's father, the Earl of Clarendon.

Many causes combined at this moment to detract from the cheerfulness and brilliancy of the court. Ten days after the marriage of James, which certainly did not tend to increase the family concord, the younger brother of the King, Henry, Duke of Gloucester, a youth "of extraordinary hopes," died of smallpox, a scourge which always devastated the

¹ Pepys, 10th December, 1660.

² James' "Life," p. 387.

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country, hardly one person, high or low, being, at that period, immune from its visitation. Three months later, on the 1st December, the Princess of Orange, mother to William, who came to attend the coronation of her brother, also fell a victim to the dread disease.¹

Charles grieved sincerely, both for the brother to whom he was fondly attached—"never in his life did he seem so much troubled as on this occasion"—and for the sister whose generosity provided him with valuable assistance during the squalid days of his exile. But if he lost the society of one sister he gained the presence and affection of another, an episode which formed the purest and most pleasant incident of his life.

Princess Henriette, "Madame," as she afterwards became, a girl of sixteen, visited England in her mother's company. There is but little detailed information concerning her doings in the land of her birth—she was born in Exeter in the year 1644—but there is abundant testimony from subsequent events to show that Charles grew deeply and sincerely attached to her.

Sitting at the Council table, his thoughts wandered to the fair girl: "I would willingly make a visit to my sister at Tunbridge for a night or two at farthest; when do you think I could best spare the time?" he scribbled on a piece of paper and threw across to the Lord Chancellor, Clarendon, who in tutorly fashion answered back: "I know no reason why for such time, two nights, you should not go the next week, Tuesday or Thursday. I suppose you will go with a light train?"

In his usual careless manner Charles replied: "I intend to take nothing but my night bag." "You will not go without 40 or 50 horse," warned the careful Chancellor, to which came the characteristic reply: "I count that in my night bag."²

In December Henrietta Maria the mother and Henriette the "deare, deare" sister returned to France; within four

¹ James' "Life," p. 386 n.; Burnet, Vol. I., p. 116.

² Clarendon, State Papers, p. 40.



CATHERINE OF BRAGANZA IN PORTUGUESE DRESS.

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months of their visit to England the latter married Philippe, Duke of Orleans ("Monsieur," to use the title generally accorded him), the brother to Louis XIV., King of France, a match so splendid as to elicit congratulations from all sides and which, as after events proved, exercised considerable influence over the relations between England and the French court.

The chief object of the Queen Mother's visit to England remained to be fulfilled—to find a wife for her eldest son who would be agreeable to the Government of France.

A marriage with a Protestant princess would undoubtedly have been most popular with the Parliament and people of Great Britain, but a difficulty existed in finding a suitable lady.

Charles disliked German women. "Oddsfish, they are all foggy," he once exclaimed, although he did not explain whether the epithet applied to the density of their intellects or the thickness of their figures.¹ The court of Spain showed great anxiety over the match, and as, at that time, no princess of the blood royal was eligible, an offer was made to treat the Princesses of Parma as daughters of Spain and dower them accordingly, if Charles would contract an alliance with either one of them.

Lord Bristol forthwith went as a committee of taste to report to the King on the subject ; but, alas ! one princess was too fat and the other so convincingly ugly that he dared not recommend either to such an experienced judge of feminine beauty as his master.²

Charles, therefore, nothing loth, listened to the advice and proposals of the French court, who continually urged upon the English King the great advantages of a match with Donna Catarina of Braganza, the sister of Alfonso, King of Portugal.

While the English alliance would prove invaluable to the little kingdom of Portugal, threatened with subjugation

¹ Carte's "Ormonde," p. 254.

² Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., pp. 162 *et passim* ; Clarendon, State Papers, Supplement, p. 8.

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by Spain, and would therefore prove most grateful to the French Government, the match afforded many tempting advantages to England.

The dowry of the young princess consisted of two millions of cruzados, more than £800,000 sterling, a very welcome present to a King whose finances, even thus early in his reign, were hopelessly involved. Large commercial privileges, the cession of Tangiers on the North African coast, which gave England a commanding place of vantage in the Mediterranean, and of Bombay, which afforded an opportunity of obtaining the control of the East Indian trade, were acquisitions which no nation could afford to despise.

Neither Parliament nor the personal advisers of Charles made the least opposition to the match. Ormonde, Clarendon, Southampton and Nicolas, staunch Protestants, believed that great advantages might accrue to English commerce, at that time the "idol" of the nation, by the opportunities afforded by the proposed dowry; consequently the treaty of marriage was signed on the 23rd June, 1661.

The picture of the princess promised much personal charm; unfortunately the fulfilment did not come up to expectation. Courtiers may be trusted to find beauty in any royal personage—they succeeded in doing so in the case of Catherine—but such kindly observers as gentle John Evelyn, when describing the Queen's train as consisting of ladies in "monstrous fardingales, their complexion olivader and sufficiently unagreeable," could only pay such a qualified compliment to Catherine as "she was yet the handsomest countenance of all the rest though low in stature, prettily shaped, languishing and excellent eyes, her teeth wronging her mouth by sticking a little too far out"; then with true courtier instinct adding, "for the rest lovely enough."¹

Poor Catherine! "She is a very little woman with a pretty tolerable face, she neither in person nor manners had any one article to stand in competition with the charms

¹ Evelyn, Vol. I., p. 385.

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of the Countess of Castlemaine, the first woman of her age.”¹ Reresby in these words puts the whole case. Charles with his usual careless good nature might, at first, say that there was nothing in her face which “in the least degree can shoque one,” that he felt he could make her “a good husband,” and so forth, but it is evident that from the very earliest interview “he was not excessively charmed with his new bride.”

Small in stature, with a long body and such short legs that she appeared, at first sight, to be kneeling instead of standing up, attired in the most unbecoming habit of her country, a stiff farthingale with wide skirts, her hair strangely dressed, “the foretop long and turned aside very strangely,” with two large bows of ribbon, one on each side of her head, it is not surprising that as her tall graceful husband advanced to meet her he stopped with astonishment and, turning to his companion, said in consternation: “George! they have brought me a bat, not a woman!”

The attendants also excited amusement and ridicule; “six frights who called themselves maids of honour, and a duenna, another monster, who took the title of governess to these extraordinary beauties.”² When, moreover, it is remembered that Queen Catherine unhappily possessed constitutional defects, “nauseous distempers so disagreeable in many respects not fit to mention,” also that she had “attained twenty-five years of age, which in Portuguese is equal to forty in our climate,”³ it is not difficult to understand that Charles, whose animal propensities were as abnormal as reprehensible, remained under the influence of the lovely Castlemaine, beautiful alike in face and figure.

The Queen, discerning the name of Lady Castlemaine in the list of her ladies in waiting, caused it immediately to be erased and gave orders that the favourite should not be admitted to the royal presence. Charles insisted on the reinstatement of his mistress, and, it is said, one day himself

¹ Reresby's "Memoirs."

² Grammont.

³ Aylesbury Memoirs, p. 7.

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actually led her into the apartment where the Queen and court were assembled. Catherine naturally resented the insult, "her colour changed, tears gushed out of her eyes, her nose bled, and she fainted"; so Clarendon describes the incident.

It is difficult to understand Charles's reasons for this inexcusable conduct. Possibly infatuation for the beautiful creature who had delivered herself up to him, possibly the fear of the ridicule of his witty court and dread of the charge that he was governed by a jealous wife; but every writer bears testimony to his "good breeding and good manners," and with all his faults he was never unmanly, petty, or tyrannical.¹

In this instance he shows strange persistence in his purpose. He desired Clarendon to interview the Queen with the object of inducing her to revoke her decision, and when the Chancellor, with equal courage and right-mindedness, remonstrated with him on the cruelty of such conduct and drew his attention to the fact that he, Charles himself, strongly blamed the behaviour of his cousin, Louis of France, in thrusting Mademoiselle de la Valliere on his wife, Charles, in one of his rare fits of anger, lost his temper and wrote a letter commanding Clarendon to use his best endeavours "to facilitate what I am sure my honour is so much concerned in," ending with the threatening remark, "and whosoever I find to be my Lady Castlemaine's enemy in this matter, I do promise, upon my word, to be his enemy so long as I live."²

Apart from this conduct, which, whatever may have been its motive, was disgraceful and unpardonable, Charles treated his wife with kindness and at times with affection. There is an account of his sitting by her bedside in her illness, in sorrow and regret, endeavouring to ease her mind, as half-delirious she complained of the ugliness of her child, born only in her imagination, by declaring that "it was a very fine boy indeed."³ He frequently speaks of her kindly

¹ Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 320.

² "Secret History," Vol. I., p. 449.

³ Pepys, 26th October, 1663.

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in his letters to Henriette, and in one he asks his sister "to buy a little book of devotion which my wife desires to have ; and pray send me some images to put into prayer bookes ; they are for my wife who can get none heere. I assure you it will be a great present to her"—the whole allusion being couched in a tone of tenderness almost of affection.¹

It must also be remembered to Charles's credit that, disappointed as certainly he was in the Queen's inability to bear him a child, unsatisfied as her want of beauty must have left his sensual nature, on at least two occasions he distinctly and decidedly refused to be accessory to any scheme for divorcing her ; and during the Popish Plot, at a time when his own life and the maintenance of his throne lay in the balance, he defended and upheld her cause with devotion and courage.²

If the marriage of Catherine caused disappointment to the King, the dowry he received with her equally failed to fulfil expectation. The money, anxiously desired for the purpose of paying many pressing liabilities, instead of arriving in the shape of solid silver crowns consisted largely in cargoes of sugar, spices, other commodities and bills of exchange, the former difficult to sell and the latter not easy to realise.³

Tangiers also, of which "such mighty things were said as if it had been reserved for the King's reign to make England as glorious abroad as it was happy at home," proved a costly possession, and, after requiring a considerable outlay, was abandoned in 1688. At the time of its cession by Portugal it produced, as events turned out, a fruitful cause of popular discontent. The maintenance of the garrison at Tangiers and the cost of building a mole, absolutely necessary to protect the harbour, amounted to such a charge that it became impossible for Charles's impoverished exchequer to bear the upkeep of that place as well as of Dunkirk.⁴

¹ "Madame," pp. 138, 150.

² Burnet, Vol. I., p. 178 ; Prideaux Letters.

³ Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 316.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 383 ; "James' Life," p. 394.

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This latter town, yielded up to Cromwell by the French Government, was ardently desired both by Spain, to whom it formerly belonged, and by France, in whose side it remained a thorn.

Charles, on friendly terms with Louis, felt greatly tempted to accept the heavy price offered for the coveted fortress. By withdrawing the garrison £100,000 per annum could be saved ; the harbour afforded small facilities for protecting a fleet of any size, and the sum of £200,000, which Louis expressed his readiness to give, would be a welcome increment to a very depleted treasury. Monck and Sandwich, the military and naval experts, spoke in depreciatory terms of the value of the place as a fortress, and so, after much consideration, the sale was concluded.¹

Great criticism and some odium attached to Charles and his ministers for their share in this transaction ; but neither were merited. In the opinion of Clarendon, Southampton, and the rest of the Council, Tangiers would become a far more valuable acquisition than Dunkirk ; there is no reason to believe that, in arriving at this decision and in permitting the sale, ministers were actuated by any dishonest or unpatriotic motives, or to presume that their judgment was unsound.

Nevertheless the people took mortal offence at the proceedings ; they declared that the great residence, building for Clarendon, would be paid for out of the bribes he received from Louis for permitting the cession of the place, and they gave the name of " Dunkirk House " to the palatial mansion.² In fact a popular prejudice began to arise against the policy which the King and Council were gradually adopting, and when the mob declaimed against the sale of Dunkirk it unwittingly showed its latent antipathy to that alliance with France which afterwards proved such a prolific source of controversy between the King and the Parliament.

¹ Clarendon, " Life," Vol. II., p. 390 ; Burnet, p. 137.

² Pepys, 21st February, 1664.

CHAPTER III.

CHARLES AND THE CONTINENT.

At the time of the restoration of Charles II. the great political controversy which agitated the continent of Europe centred round the question of the succession to the Spanish throne. Spain, from a period of brilliant dominion and prosperity, with that national decadence so peculiarly characteristic of Latin races, fell to a state of weakness and apathy which not only lost for her the material advantages she formerly enjoyed, but even imperilled her position among the nations of Europe.

The King, Philip IV., overcome with the humiliation of his country and the disastrous failure of his own policy, died leaving a child of four years old heir to the throne.

This child, afterwards Charles II. of Spain, from his youth displayed both physical and mental weakness, his incapacity for the performance of regal functions becoming so marked that the Venetian ambassador is reported to have said: "If it was necessary that he should be a prince, he ought to be a prince of the Church," a remark which implied a somewhat low estimate of the cardinal qualities necessary for a member of the hierarchy.

The almost certain prospect that this weakling would die without heirs reopened the whole subject of the succession to his throne and inheritance.

By the treaty of the Pyrenees France had been afforded an opportunity of advancing pretensions to Spanish possessions which proved a fertile source of trouble to Europe. Louis XIII. and also his son Louis XIV. married infantas of Spain—the former Anne of Austria, sister of Philip IV., the latter, in the summer of 1660, Maria Teresa, daughter of the same sovereign. Both of these princesses, by the funda-

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mental laws of Spain, were entitled, in default of male heirs, to the succession to the crown ; both of them on the occasion of their marriage executed acts of renunciation, yet, barely a year after the execution of the document, the husband of the younger endeavoured to abrogate a settlement which deprived his wife and his prospective children of a splendid heritage.

Mazarin died in 1661, of stone in the heart, as the French people bitterly remarked, and by his death released the young and ambitious Louis from the tutelage under which he fettered.

Freed from the control of the sagacious but masterful Cardinal, Louis forthwith pursued the policy which dominated his whole career. As Mignet succinctly puts it, " Louis XIV. from the time of his marriage had engaged in three negotiations concerning the Spanish succession ; firstly, to revoke the renunciation of Maria Teresa, secondly, to partition the Low Countries between himself and the United Provinces, and thirdly, to obtain from the Spanish cabinet a friendly recognition of the right of devolution. Each of these three negotiations came to an end without a satisfactory conclusion." ¹

But although unsuccessful at the beginning, the unsettled condition of Europe gave hopes that, by perseverance, at least part of the desired advantage might be obtained.

Forty years of warfare had wearied the world of strife : the great Powers Spain and Austria lay enfeebled and broken ; England occupied herself with her own domestic affairs ; the remainder of Europe either rested content or became a negligible quantity.

Failing, therefore, to establish his first two claims, Louis strongly urged his third demand, the so-called "droit de dévolution." This proposition based itself upon a custom of Brabant, "sufficiently grotesque and purely local," by which the children of the first marriage enjoyed undisputed inheritance of the entire parental property to the complete

¹ Mignet, "Négociations relative à la Succession d'Espagne," Vol. I., p. 411.

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exclusion of all the progeny of a second marriage, the parent, however, possessing a life interest.

If Louis succeeded in transforming this "civil right into a political ordonance" he would oust the youthful prince royal of Spain, Charles, from the possession of those parts of the Spanish dominions which acknowledged this custom, the fertile provinces called Les Pays Bas ; for Louis' wife, Maria Teresa, was the only issue from the marriage of her father Philip with Elizabeth of France, the first marriage, her half-brother Charles being the child of the second alliance which her father subsequently contracted with Maria Anne of Austria in 1649.

The annexation of these Low Countries formed the keynote of Louis' policy.

France, protected on most of her frontiers by the hand of Nature—the sea or mountain ranges, Pyrenees and Alps—lay exposed on the north-east. Naturally, therefore, a rectification of outline in this direction formed a prominent part of the policy of a monarch so deeply imbued with the desire of territorial aggrandisement and national glory.

But any encroachment met with violent opposition from the Dutch, who firmly held to the adage "The French as a friend but not as a neighbour." An intimation of this feeling had already been conveyed to the King ; naturally, therefore, any event which would weaken the power or occupy the attention of Holland commended itself to Louis.

At this critical moment the long threatened war broke out between England and Holland.

Louis, who in 1662 had made an offensive and defensive treaty with the Dutch, found himself in a position of some little embarrassment. He frankly wrote to the Comte d'Estrades, his envoy to the United Provinces : " If I carry out this treaty of 1662 to the letter I greatly prejudice my principal interests ; . . . besides I lose England who (I tell you in strict confidence) . . . has offered me ' *carte blanche* ' for all I desire in the Low Countries and does not want for herself an inch of ground " (*prétendre un pouce de terre*).¹

¹ Mignet, Vol. I., p. 415.

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But if the exigencies of his policy inclined the French King towards England, his English brother Charles by his own personal predilections, and in the interests of national expansion, showed every disposition to reciprocate the sentiment.

Many circumstances drew Charles towards France—family connections, political affinity, a pronounced liking for the splendour, comfort and civilised habits of the dignified and magnificent court.

Much French blood flowed in his veins, and although, perhaps, owing to this cause he may have inherited from his maternal grandfather a somewhat indiscriminate and extensive attachment to the fair sex, yet he undoubtedly also gained a sense of refinement which, as contemporary writers bear witness, he introduced into the surroundings of his daily life in a manner previously unknown to English households. France in the seventeenth century had made greater advances in the art of civilisation than any other nation of Europe; for Grammont bears witness to the influence by which French customs ameliorated social life in England, “where he found so little difference in the manners and conversation of those with whom he chiefly associated that he could scarcely believe that he was out of his own country.”¹

Moreover, Charles felt a high appreciation of the aims and methods of his brilliant cousin and contemporary Louis, who achieved those very same objects which he himself most fervently desired to attain—a religious toleration minimising the domestic differences then disturbing the nation, and that willing acceptance of the royal prerogatives which implied a corresponding diminution in the activity and pretensions of the legislative assemblies.

Last, though not least, the marriage of the Duc d'Orléans, the brother and heir presumptive to the Most Christian King, to his sister Henriette, the one real tender spot in his soul, formed, as Louis himself said, “a new tie which will draw still closer the bands of our friendship,” a connection

¹ Grammont, p. 111.

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which caused Charles to reciprocate to the full the feeling which dictated the words "Nor would I lose the opportunity . . . to tell you that I am, my brother, very truly your good brother, Louis." ¹

These were reasons which attracted Charles to France ; there were many which repelled him from Holland.

In the hour of his direst distress, at the instigation of Cromwell, the United Provinces drove him from their territories ; they deprived his nephew, the son of his widowed sister, of his hereditary dignities, and paid no attention to the strong appeal which he himself, about to embark for his native land to be restored to the throne of his fathers, addressed to John de Witt, the Grand Pensionary, that favourable consideration might be given to the claims of the princess and her little son, "who are extreamly deare to me." ²

It is true that the Dutch Government revoked the Act of Exclusion in 1660, but it refused to confer the stadholdership on William, and showed an evident intention of withholding as much power as possible from the boy who then represented the House of Orange.

For years past, moreover, Holland had been a hot-bed of disaffection to the English Crown. The Sectaries, driven from England—not so much by legal process or the fear of legal process, for Charles was always merciful, as by an irreconcilable dislike to monarchical institutions—fled to Holland and there carried on a campaign of intrigue and sedition both against Charles and against any form of settled government or religion which did not exactly square with their own fantastic ideas.

These perhaps were personal and, as regards William of Orange, sentimental reasons ; others of great material importance existed also.

The attachment to commercial pursuits, always ingrained in the British nation, at this period grew stronger and stronger. "The thing which is nearest the harte of the

¹ "Madame," p. 87.

² Charles's Declaration, 1660.

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nation is trade and all that belongs to it," wrote Charles to his sister ;¹ and Louis, no mean observer, in one of his many dispatches declares : " Of this Empire " (the dominion of the seas), " they are now so greedy that it may be asserted that from this wish and from their intention to secure to themselves the trade of the whole world arise all the difficulties and quarrels they have against the Dutch States." ²

Both Charles and his brother, James, Duke of York, took a strong and genuine interest in all that concerned the commercial and naval expansion of the country. In 1660, immediately after his restoration, he renewed the Navigation Act, an ordinance which assisted English commerce even more than the measure put into force by Cromwell in 1651, up to which time the Dutch had monopolised the carrying trade of Europe. He also formed a Trade Council to discuss and control matters relative to business transactions, and urged Parliament, as his brother James bears witness, to greater activity in all legislation tending to make trade flourish. But perhaps the best testimony to Charles's conduct in this matter is supplied by Clarendon : " Upon the King's first arrival in England he manifested a very great desire to improve the general traffic and trade of the kingdom, and on all occasions conferred with the most active merchants upon it and offered all he could contribute to the advancement thereof." ³

Indeed this desire for the expansion and augmentation of the national commerce primarily caused the war with Holland.

Charles and James took prominent parts in the establishment of trading companies, " those to East India, Turkey, Hamborough and Canary, and moreover set up a new one in Guinny." ⁴ The Guinea company, now remembered by the fact that its name is still attached to the piece of money coined from the gold brought thence to England, supplied the match to the fuel.

¹ " Madame," p. 272.

² " Jusserand," French Ambassador, p. 234.

³ Clarendon, " Life," Vol. I., p. 231.

⁴ " James' Life," p. 399.

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For years past the Dutch settlements in Africa absorbed by far the greater part of the trade in the locality. Better placed on the banks of a river, and more enterprising than their English rivals, they drew to themselves nearly all the commercial intercourse then existing with the natives in the interior.

Under the auspices of Charles and James the English company made strenuous efforts to recover the position. They obtained the advice of Sir Richard Ford and other merchants, who by some means secured the secret, already in possession of the Dutch, of dyeing the "sayes (rough serge) of such a colour as the blacks liked and giving them the smell in packing them up like that which was used at Leyden."¹ Even in those days a Merchandise Marks Act seems to have been desirable.

Some reprisals having been attempted by the Dutch settlers, at the request of the English company Charles lent two ships of war under Sir Robert Holmes, which attacked and destroyed the Dutch factories at Cape de Verde and Castle Commerin, finally creating such a condition of unrest that the French ambassador wrote to the foreign secretary, de Lionne: "War will begin in Guinea and will continue in Europe."²

From the time of the first war, during Cromwell's rule, the English people hated the Dutch; the "butterboxes," as old Nicolas calls them, being invariably treated with scorn and contumely whenever the nation found an opportunity for venting its dislike.

"Holland, that scarce deserves the name of land,
As but the offscouring of the British sand

This undigested vomit of the sea,
Fell to the Dutch by just propriety;"

sings Andrew Marvell, the Puritan poet, and his contempt was shared by his countrymen, although their manner of showing it was more direct and less metrical.

¹ "James' Life," p. 400.

² "Jusserand," French Ambassador, p. 135.

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Now the tidings of Dutch outrages in Africa still further inflamed the national antipathy. Complaints arose that the Dutch in India claimed the right to annoy English merchants and damage English commerce ; insistence was laid on the fact that the stipulations of the treaty with Cromwell, renewed in 1662, by which the island of Polaroon, in the Spice Islands, should be surrendered to England, had never been carried out ; petitions from merchants flowed in praying for redress, declaring that their losses amounted to hundreds of thousands of pounds ; at last the national irritation rose to fever heat and the desire for war ran like wildfire through the land.¹

Louis, anxious to avoid hostilities until the moment propitious for his own projects arrived, endeavoured to maintain peace, and doubting the capacity of his ambassador, de Cominges, despatched a new embassy consisting of Henri de Bourbon, the old Duc de Vernieuil, and Monsieur Courtin. During the journey to London crowds came out to see the procession and "kept enquiring from persons of our suite why we were going to London, and being informed that we meant to secure peace between England and Holland, they without hesitation answered : If they come for nothing else they may as well go back." ²

Partly owing to a desire to meet the wishes of Louis, and partly to the influence of Clarendon, Charles at first showed a disinclination for war.

The thought of the vast expense incidental to warlike operations appalled the saving soul of the old Chancellor, while the King himself could but own that hostilities would add enormously to the financial difficulties which already surrounded him.³

On the 19th September, 1664, he wrote to his sister :

"The feeling here against Holland is extreamely strong and I find myself almost the only man in the Kingdom who doth not desire war." [And earlier in the year he told her :]

¹ "James' Life," p. 401 ; Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 422.

² "Jusserand," p. 140 ; Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 501.

³ Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., pp. 422 *et passim*.

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"I never saw so great an appetite to a warre as is, both in this town and country, espetially in the Parliament men, who I am confident would pawn their estates to mainetaine a war; but all this shall not governe me for I will looke meerly what is just for the honour and good of England and will be very steady in what I resolve and if I be forsed to a warre, I shall be ready with as good ships and men as ever was seene and leave the successe to God." ¹

This is hardly a letter which a king, thinking of nothing but his pleasures, a careless self-indulgent libertine, would write to one to whom, undeniably, he confided all his thoughts and designs; neither does the subjoined epistle, one of a score of similar communications, in any way corroborate the statement made by a late biographer: "It is difficult to decide whether questions of imperial policy or the new fashion of waistcoats lately introduced into France occupied the chief place in Charles's mind."

In a long letter to Henriette, urging her to do her best to remove all jealousies between Louis and himself, he continues:

"I do assure you there is nothing more in my wish and endeavour that this present treaty may be finished, that we may the better and the sooner and with less noyse think of a more strict and useful friendship. I called for the treaty of 1610, (which in the confusion the late times hath cast all our papers could not presently be founde,) and have perused it myself and by myselfe and find the whole so unapplicable to this conjuncture . . . that much more time must inevitably be spent in making that treaty intelligible and practicall than would serve to finish this." ²

Charles in writing to his sister invariably introduced some affectionate remark, some light gossip or other trivial inquiry about matters which he thought would amuse and interest the young girl he dearly loved: he speaks of sealing-wax, gloves, waistcoats and such like; even in the above letter he adds a postscript requesting Le Notre (the famous artist and landscape gardener) to design a cascade; but,

¹ "Madame," pp. 172, 160.

² *Ibid.*, p. 173.

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apart from these frivolities, in every letter there are instances of great mental acuteness, and the fact remains, as is made plain by the above epistle, that, in order to bring about an understanding with a brother monarch, he personally read through the treaties previously existing between the two countries and fully acquainted himself with the particulars. As Grammont said concerning him, and as is apparent to all who resist the prejudice created by his immoral life, Charles always shows striking ability in urgent affairs.

He specially desired at this moment either to obtain the friendship or ensure the neutrality of Louis. Probably he knew nothing of the treaty signed in 1662 by which Louis bound himself to an alliance with the United Provinces, and, as can be seen in the correspondence with his sister, the trusted confidant of the two Kings, he earnestly desired a "straight friendship" with the French.

War was inevitable.

After Holme's raid on the Dutch factories in Africa, de Ruyter, hurriedly despatched from the Mediterranean with his squadron, recaptured all the possessions on the Gold Coast and dispossessed the English of their new acquisitions.¹

On the other side the Smyrna fleet on its way to Holland fell a victim to an attack by Captain Allen, who, according to Pepys, sank the "*King Solomon*," a ship worth £150,000, and took three others.²

Still Louis, to whose schemes a distinct declaration in favour of either combatant would have been most detrimental, endeavoured through his envoys to avert hostilities.

The three French diplomatists used all their art to win the co-operation of their Batavian brother, Van Gogh, but with small success.

The fiery Dutchman not only rejected their overtures, but violently inveighed against the English as aggressors: "I too have been 'un homme d'armes' and I full well know how to die with the others."

The Frenchman gave up the task in despair: "We

¹ "James' Life," p. 402.

² Pepys, 23rd January, 1665.

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allowed him to recover from his furious fit which had been caused either by the excellence of his zeal or maybe by a very long sword which was dangling at his side.”¹

Whatever may have been the relative power of their diplomacy, the envoys of Louis certainly possessed more sense of humour than their Dutch *confrère*. “Sire,” said Van Gogh to Charles, “I warn you that if hostilities do not stop the Dutch people will cease to pray for you.”

The King, with that illuminating smile which constantly lightened his dark features, immediately and genially replied that he would be content with fewer prayers if he could get more money.

Repulsed by the Dutchman, Courtin, by far the most efficient of the three French envoys, made a direct appeal personally to Charles, trusting to the impression which his wit, common sense and judgment had made on the good graces of the Merry Monarch.

But though very willing to be amused and entertained, Charles required more convincing argument than the *débonnair* Frenchman could produce ; so at last terminating the audience he remarked : “My fleet has set sail, my people are in a rage ; what more is to be said ” ; then, calling to Lord St. Albans, he added : “Do come here ; here is a little man I can neither silence nor convince ” ; after which, characteristically, the King went to supper.²

The discomfited diplomatist could only revenge himself by writing to his superior : “This is the difference between him and our master, that his Majesty orders his subjects to go as he pleases, this King of England has to follow his ”—a remark at that time perfectly true ; for perhaps the first, certainly for the last, time in his reign Charles found himself in complete accord with his people and his Parliament.³

They ardently desiring war he no longer objected, and made the formal declaration on the 4th March, 1666, when

¹ “Jusserand,” p. 143.

² *Ibid.*, p. 144.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

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Parliament willingly voted the great sum of £2,500,000 for necessary expenses, and all sorts and conditions of his subjects acclaimed their King's decision.¹

When Charles in his letter to his sister declared that if compelled to fight he possessed as "good ships and men as ever were seen," he spoke the truth.

He took great and personal interest in all matters relating to naval affairs, even being gifted with some ability as a designer of ships. At the time of the Restoration a heavy debt saddled the Navy and a great deficiency of stores existed both in the yards and magazines, Clarendon declaring that only sufficient firearms and ammunition could be found for 3,000 men, while the Army numbered 60,000, and powder and shot for five ships of war when a hundred were at sea.²

Charles, although he kept these facts secret, so that the enemies of England might not know her defenceless condition, took the first opportunity of remedying the scandal. Out of the subsidy of £1,200,000 voted by Parliament, as revenue for the monarch's normal expenses, he expended no less than £800,000 in supplying the lack of ships and stores,³ with the result that, at the time of the declaration of war, the British Navy had attained a very high standard both as to numbers and efficiency.

When preparations began for actual warfare, Charles, completely in his element, visited the dockyards, superintending both the building and the fitting of the vessels with that careless vigour which marked all his endeavours in enterprises which were to his taste.

One hot day in July, sailing to the fleet, accompanied by the Queen, being incommoded by the heat he took off his wig and pourpoint, with the result that he caught a severe cold and fever, which necessitated "twice being bled" and "in eight dayes eate nothing but watter grewelle."⁴

¹ "Parliamentary History," Vol. IV., pp. 292, 306.

² Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 276.

³ "James' Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 399.

⁴ "Jusserand," p. 87; "Madame," p. 166.

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Even this last affliction, however, did not deter him from similar expeditions, for in November of the same year he invited de Cominges to make another inspection of the ships which were refitting and in commission: the ambassador thus relating his adventures:

"I must confess, Sire, that nothing finer than all this Navy can well be imagined, nothing grander or more impressive than this large number of ships ready made or being built. The King had an excellent meal served to us on one of his yachts; he drank the health of your Majesty and asked the company to second him, and this was done heartily. I returned thanks and on your behalf I proposed the health of the King of England. Both were honoured with so many guns and so much noise that the weather changed."

Not the first time that the sound of guns caused an alteration in the weather, political or otherwise! In this instance, however, with somewhat disastrous results to poor de Cominges, who ruefully states:

"While we were thus carousing the sea became rough and completed what the wine had begun. The Queen, who was on the river with the ladies, escaped the sickness but not the fear. All the rest were less lucky as was only too apparent."¹

Once more, this time at five in the morning (if Charles was a confirmed *roué* he certainly was also a remarkably early riser), the King requested the ambassador to accompany him to Chatham to inspect "six vessels or rather war machines the finest and largest to be seen at sea." De Cominges accepted the invitation and especially admired the *Royal Charles*, the flagship of the Duke of York, which mounted eighty guns, two of them of great length and calibre.

It is evident from the history of this period that the home Governments in no wise considered themselves responsible for the acts of their trading companies in distant parts of the world. The hostilities which took place in the East

¹ "Jusserand," p. 136.

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and the far West during the year 1664, although known to the authorities both in London and the Hague, apparently were not considered as acts of war between the countries. The bulk of the nation took but little heed of what went on in far-away lands, but directly the King and Council made a formal declaration of war against the Dutch the popular enthusiasm rose, scores of old Cavaliers, restless with inaction, hoping for fresh opportunities of glory, made applications for commissions in the fleet, while many young members of noble houses also proffered their services.¹

Lingard states that James, to whom the chief command had been given, declined to allow any of these new comers to serve except as volunteers, and with great wisdom gave important posts to several of Cromwell's old officers, who, being sailors by profession, had obtained practical experience under Blake in the first war against the Dutch.²

Yet the ships were full of young and adventurous gentlemen, reckless and dissipated according to the habits of society in those days. It is said that Lord Buckhurst, afterwards Earl of Dorset, one of the most dissolute of the whole dissolute crew, the night before the battle of the 3rd June wrote the ballad

"To all ye ladies now on land
We men at sea indite,
But first would have you understand
How hard it is to write ;"

and although, perhaps, the story may not be absolutely true, yet there is ample evidence that the bearers of illustrious names showed wonderful courage and *sang-froid*, embarking with enthusiasm on an expedition which proved to many of them an untimely grave.³

The fleet, the largest yet gathered together under the British flag, sailed on the 21st April, the Duke of York, in command, on board the *Royal Charles*, Prince Rupert and

¹ Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 470.

² "Lingard," Vol. XI., p. 279 ; Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 480.

³ Johnson's "Poets."

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the Earl of Sandwich at the head of the van and rear squadrons. Contrary winds for a while kept the opposing forces apart, but on the 3rd June, 1665, in Southwold Bay, off Lowestoft, the first great battle of the war was fought.¹

The Dutch, commanded by Opdam their most experienced admiral, suffered a total defeat, their gallant leader being blown up in his flagship together with 500 of his crew; many other vessels were destroyed or captured, several high officers and 7,000 men killed or taken prisoners, and an unfortunate incident, not yet thoroughly elucidated, alone prevented their complete destruction.

While James wearied by the fatigues of the battle slept in his cabin, having given orders to pursue the enemy as severely as possible, Henry Brounker, a gentleman of his bedchamber, took it upon himself, speaking in his master's name, to order the flagship to slacken sail. With some demur the officer in charge obeyed, presuming the order came from the admiral, with the result that the remainder of the fleet followed the example of the flagship and, dropping behind, permitted the enemy to effect an escape and obtain safety behind the sand banks at Texel.²

Great censure fell on Brounker for the act; James discharged him from his household, and Parliament subsequently ordered an inquiry into his conduct and finally dismissed him from the House of Commons. According to Pepys, Brounker bore the reputation of being "a pestilent rogue and atheist," who would sell his king and country for 6*d.*; ³ but both the inquiry and the penalties were only enforced some years after the commission of the alleged offence, and to whom the blame rightly belongs even still remains in some doubt.

The victory cost England far less than the loss to the enemy. One ship only was sunk and 600 men killed or wounded, including, however, an undue proportion of officers.

¹ "James' Life," p. 408; Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., pp. 505 *et passim*.

² "James' Life," p. 408.

³ Pepys, 29th August, 1667; Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 513; "James' Life," p. 423.

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As James in the heat of the action stood on the quarter-deck of his ship a cannon shot struck the group of distinguished persons surrounding him, covering him with their blood and brains, killing Lord Muskerry, Mr. Boyle, and Lord Falmouth—"as great a loss as is possible in a good frinde, poore C. Barckley," as Charles himself sorrowfully remarked.¹

The Earl of Marlborough, the Earl of Portland and Rear-Admiral Sansum also fell, while Sir John Lawson, a fine seaman, sustained such a severe wound in the knee that being brought home, after much suffering, he died, severe complications having set in; as narrated by Pepys: "He hath a feaver, a thrush and a hickup all three together which are, it seems, very bad symptoms."²

At such a triumph the nation greatly and naturally rejoiced, yet almost immediately after the victory a reaction of gloom succeeded.

The plague had come and day by day increased in virulence.

A phenomenally hot season assisted the pestilence, which both in the narrow streets of old London and over the country-side raged with unprecedented violence.³

"It broke the trade of the nation and swept away an hundred thousand souls, the greatest havoc that any plague have ever made in England," cries Bishop Burnet; and Sir John Reresby adds "that people dropped dead in the streets as they went about their business." The hackney coachman who drove Pepys sat motionless on his box struck down by the dread disease, and Courtin, the French ambassador, complains that a dead man lay across the doorway of their house, "a bad habit which I fear begins to spread."⁴

First the court removed to Hampton Court and then on to Salisbury, finally, when still pursued by the pestilence,

¹ "Madame," 216.

² Pepys, 17th June, 1665; "James' Life," p. 411; Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 507.

³ Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 476.

⁴ Burnet, p. 148; "Reresby Memoirs"; "Jusserand," Appendix, p. 249.

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to Oxford, where Parliament held a session and, even in this time of horror, once more displayed that narrow religious intolerance which now invariably dominated it by passing the Five Mile Act, a law which operated with peculiar severity in this season of disease and penury.¹

Matters also were not going well with the war. Lord Sandwich relying, as Arlington states, on an "assurance of the court of Denmark that they would favour us," attempted to capture the Dutch homeward-bound fleet as it lay at anchor in Berghen harbour, neutral waters. The Danish land batteries, not having received orders to the contrary, repulsed the assault with their fire, and Sandwich, failing in the premature attempt, sailed away empty-handed. Falling in with a few stragglers he picked up some prizes, but instead of remitting their value to the treasury sorely in need of money, he distributed it among his officers; being called upon for an explanation, he relinquished his command and was sent, in honourable exile, as ambassador to Spain.²

Charles, fully alive to the necessity of effecting an attack by land as well as by sea, during the previous year made overtures for a friendly alliance to Spain, the German Powers, Denmark, and Sweden. Meeting with no success, in June, a few weeks after the naval victory, he sent Sir William Temple to obtain if possible the co-operation of the Bishop of Munster, the only potentate still open to advances.

Bernhard von Galen, as Temple pictures him, "was a soldier in his youth, and seems in his naturals rather made for the sword than the Cross"; he had moreover a mortal hatred of the Dutch for denying his right to the lordship of Borkelo, and on the promise of a subsidy from Charles readily consented to make an attack on their frontiers.

Temple, with the help of Alderman Blackwell, one of those prominent bankers who assisted the English treasury in financial matters, greatly to his own enrichment, contrived to supply the warlike prelate with an instalment of his

¹ "Parliamentary History," Vol. IV., p. 327.

² Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., pp. 530 *et passim*; Arlington's Letters, p. 18.

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promised aid, who then, in September, 1665, declared war, invaded the Dutch territories, and with perfect ease, indeed practically unopposed, overran the eastern provinces of Overijssel and Drente.¹

This incident, in itself comparatively unimportant, yet entailed serious consequences.

Louis, bound by the treaty of 1662, anxious to ensure the neutrality of the United Provinces in view of his designs upon the Spanish Netherlands, and by no means desirous that England should achieve a complete triumph, took the opportunity afforded by the aggression of the Bishop of Munster to announce his intention of abiding by his previous engagements.²

In the winter of 1665 he declared war against England and despatched a body of troops to the assistance of the United Provinces.

Judging from Temple's description, these forces could hardly be considered as valuable auxiliaries or as cordial allies :

“ Their horse were brave as they passed Maestricht, their foot rascally, their shoes upon their shoulders, their feet galled and their gallantry spent in giving the Dutch a thousand times to the devil for their kind invitation, they paid nothing as they passed or false money, took the best treatment the Dutch could give them with scorn and insolence and drank his Majesty's and the Prince of Munster's health openly in the Market Place at Maestricht.”³

But though lukewarm and insufficient, the support given by Louis produced greater results than might have been anticipated. Threatened by France and Brandenburg, the Bishop of Munster, notwithstanding the exertions of the English ambassador, in the spring of 1666 made a separate peace ;⁴ Sweden, about to proclaim a league with England, declared herself neutral, and the so-called quadruple alliance

¹ Temple, Vol. I., pp. 230, 231.

² Mignet, Vol. I., p. 423.

³ Temple, Vol. I., p. 237.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

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between Holland, Brandenburg, Brunswick, and Denmark came into existence.

At home also difficulties thickened. The plague not only depressed the trade of the country, but sensibly thinned the population of London; Stepney and such like places, from which recruits for the ships were chiefly obtained, being almost depopulated.¹ In spite, however, of reverses abroad and of scarcity of men and money at home, Charles managed to fit out a fleet early in May, and Monck and Rupert with eighty sail of the line at the end of the month, put out to meet the enemy.

But again an unfortunate mistake nearly brought disaster on the British arms.

Owing to the rumour that the French were coming down the Channel, Rupert's squadron, by command of the Duke of York—so at least Rupert declared—detached itself from the main fleet and sailed westward, leaving Monck with the bulk of the force in home waters. Monck, moving from the Downs to the Gunfleet, most unexpectedly met the whole Dutch force, and instead of retiring, as would have been prudent, with the dogged courage which always distinguished him, although the enemy possessed great superiority in numbers, immediately attacked the nearest hostile ships.

By superior discipline, greater tactical ability and indomitable courage, notwithstanding his numerical inferiority, for two whole days he continued to hold his own and inflict equal if not greater damage on the enemy.

Reinforced with sixteen ships the Dutch at length compelled him to retire, but Rupert's squadron, recalled by the sound of cannonading, appearing in the offing, the fight was renewed. With much manœuvring and some loss—the flagship of Sir George Ayscue being captured and burnt, having gone ashore on the Galloper sand—the English fleet reunited, and next morning, the fourth day of the engagement, again attacked their equally valiant enemies.

Prevented by the crippled condition of the vessels from displaying their superiority in discipline and tactics, the

¹ Clarendon, "Life," Vol. III., p. 648.

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British commanders deemed it wise to stand away homeward, which they did unmolested by the Dutch, "who made no further after us as glad to be quit of us as we of them."¹

At first both parties claimed the victory, Charles writing to Henriette on the 8th June: "I thank God we have the news of a very considerable victory over the Dutch"; but later intelligence proved that the honours of this prolonged and sanguinary contest remained with the United Provinces. They enjoyed but a short-lived triumph. Making most vigorous efforts to supply the want of men, the English admirals sallied out again on the 19th July from the "buoy at the Nore" with eighty-eight ships of war, "the best fleet for force of guns, greatness and number of ships and men that ever England did see," and meeting the enemy off the North Foreland inflicted a decisive defeat upon them.

Remaining in the vicinity of the Zuyder Zee and practically blockading the whole Dutch coast, Monck and Rupert took many prizes and inflicted enormous damage upon the enemy's commerce, burning or destroying 166 merchantmen lying at anchor in the Vlie.²

Want of stores drove the English home; the weather broke, preventing any further serious engagements, and violent gales drove both combatants, now heartily weary of the prolonged war, to the shelter of their respective harbours.

But the wind, although dividing the combatants, greatly assisted another foe.

On the 2nd September a fire broke out in London; fanned by a strong gale the flames raged for five days and laid the capital of the country in ruins. The old lath and plaster houses readily lent themselves to destruction—the extinguishing appliances were either primitive or non-existent; at last only by the drastic use of gunpowder in clearing spaces could the flames be checked and the western portion of the city saved.³

¹ Burnet, p. 154; Pepys, 4th June, 1666.

² Mignet, Vol. I., p. 483; Pepys, 15th August, 1666; Clarendon, "Life," Vol. III., p. 655; "James' Life," p. 424.

³ Burnet, p. 155.

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In emergencies such as this Charles always showed to advantage. He personally superintended the operations, made arrangements for the housing and sustenance of the thousands rendered homeless and destitute; working and rewarding with his own hands he and his brother rode from place to place, in danger from the falling *débris*, displaying a vigilance and activity described by Evelyn as "extraordinary and not indeed imaginable."¹

From the Tower to the Temple London lay reduced to ashes. "I went again to the ruins, for it was now no longer a city," declares an onlooker.

Fire, war and pestilence struck deep at the courage of the people. Naturally they sought for a victim to bear the brunt of their resentment, and for a time the Dutch, the French and the papists were execrated as the authors of this crushing disaster; but even contemporary writers, with the exception of Burnet (an inveterate liar), disbelieved in the alleged complicity, and an inquiry ordered by the Government and carried out with complete thoroughness declared the real cause of the stupendous calamity to be "The hand of God; a great wind and the season so very dry."²

But this heavy visitation and the complete dislocation of business ensuing on it brought to a climax the long impending financial crisis.

With all the jubilation, splendour and acclamation of the Restoration Charles yet succeeded only to a bankrupt inheritance.

If Oliver Cromwell had lived for five years longer he would himself have borne the brunt of the difficulties which his policy both at home and abroad entailed on his successor. The cost of the Army which maintained him in his high place by the terrorising of his fellow-countrymen, and of the Navy which ministered to his glory by triumphs over foreign enemies, reduced the financial prosperity of the country to

¹ Evelyn, Vol. II., pp. 14, 17; Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., pp. 660 *et passim*; Pepys, 2nd September, 1666.

² Calendar State Papers, 1666; "James' Life," p. 424.

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a very low ebb. His successor Richard solicited a loan of £50,000 from King Louis of France, as is shown in the letter from Bordeaux, the French ambassador, to Cardinal Mazarin.¹ In 1659, after the Protector's death, a committee of Parliament reported that the annual expenditure exceeded the annual income by £80,623, and only with the greatest difficulty did the new Protector, Richard, collect sufficient funds to pay his Army and Navy, the deficit on the latter at the Restoration amounting to more than one million pounds sterling.²

This question of finance is of the utmost importance, for it lies at the root of all the difficulties which Charles encountered and moulded to a considerable extent his foreign policy.

One of the weighty charges against him is the allegation that, to minister to his own immoral pleasures and to provide for his own ease and enjoyment, he imperilled his country by neglecting her defence and finally sold his heritage to a foreign monarch.

He did nothing of the kind.

He may have spent, and undoubtedly did spend, far too much money on unworthy objects, but the financial straits into which his Government fell, together with the unfortunate occurrences resulting from those straits, were caused largely by Parliament, who failed to provide funds necessary for the wants of the country, and in a minor degree by the bad system of finance to which the officials of his treasury were addicted. Parliament, it is true, voted great sums of money, but never at any time did the amount collected equal the sum voted, and rarely did the size of the vote correspond with the importance of the undertaking for which it was appropriated.³

At the Restoration Parliament settled a revenue on the monarch of £1,200,000 per annum for the purpose of maintaining the service of the Crown in a manner suitable to the wants of the country.

¹ Guizot, "Richard Cromwell," Vol. I., p. 231.

² *Ibid.*, p. 154.

³ Ranke, Vol. III., p. 334.

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This settlement was less by £100,000 per annum than the revenue assigned to Oliver Cromwell, which, in his case, proved quite inadequate for the purposes intended ; but Charles, as even common gossip, embodied in Pepys, allows, never received £1,200,000, and when additional grants were made in no case were they commensurate with the amount required.¹

During the interregnum not only had a debt of £1,250,000 accumulated on the Navy, but the yards and magazines became entirely denuded of stores.²

Of the revenue allotted to the King, £1,200,000 per annum, only £950,000 found its way into his treasury, and out of this, according to James, Duke of York and other authorities, no less than £800,000 was devoted to raising the fleet and keeping it in efficient condition. Charles, however, received in addition, by a special grant of the House of Commons, some £270,000 a year derived from an increase in the excise duties and by the imposition of the unpopular hearth tax.

A committee appointed by the House inquired thoroughly into the financial position ; from their report it appeared that the yield of revenue shrank continuously, and that a yearly deficit of £175,000 might be expected.³

In practice, however, the shrinkage appears to have been enormously larger. Mr. W. A. Shaw in his valuable contribution to the history of this period, the "Beginning of the National Debt," states, from a survey of the account books of the Exchequer, that instead of £1,200,000 per annum, his fixed hereditary revenue, Charles never received more than a yearly average of £572,000.

To quote Mr. Shaw's words : "We are thus driven to the strange conclusion that of the ordinary fixed revenue of the country which had been estimated to keep the governmental machine in motion not one-half ever came in. The surprising fact is that under such circumstances Charles's

¹ "Parliamentary History," p. 118 ; Pepys, 30th June, 1663.

² Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 238 ; "James' Life," p. 399 ; "Parliamentary History," p. 143.

³ Journal of the House of Commons, p. 498.

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Government was able to stave off the inevitable bankruptcy even until 1672.”¹

Bankruptcy, indeed, might be outwardly staved off, but the difficulty of carrying on the services of the country became almost insurmountable. Parliament when voting extra subsidies in 1666 added the proviso that the money raised should be applied only to the expenses of the Dutch war, and to enforce this an examination should be made of the accounts.

The Commons strongly objected to the King's policy of religious toleration, and opposed him, either covertly or openly, in whatever manner they thought most expedient. Doubtless by their last opposition to his wishes and by adding a special clause concerning the auditing of the accounts, which might legitimately be deemed, at that time, an invasion of his prerogative, they intended to emphasise the distrust of his measures they had already expressed and to demonstrate to him the difficulties into which a persistence in his domestic policy might inevitably lead him.²

But, whatever might be the motives of Parliament, the supply it voted invariably failed to realise the estimated sum, as can be seen by the total payments of revenue into the Exchequer.

Thus, while the expenses of the Navy from September, 1664, to September, 1666, amounted to £3,200,000, besides other items incidental to the war, the supplies voted by Parliament, sufficient, no doubt, in theory to defray the cost, yet fell short of the amount actually required by nearly one million pounds, although possibly some of the deficit was afterwards collected.

While, during the first six years of Charles's reign, half the hereditary revenue of the Crown did not find its way into the King's coffers, the additional supplies voted by Parliament also “failed to produce the expected or estimated yield by a matter of over half a million.”³

¹ Shaw, “Beginning of the National Debt,” p. 400.

² “Parliamentary History,” p. 325.

³ Shaw, “Beginning of the National Debt,” p. 399.

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As the receipts only slowly dribbled into the treasury, the Government perforce borrowed from the goldsmiths or bankers, who "did a vast trade," charging very heavy interest for the accommodation.¹

Thus, confronted with a new source of friction in Parliament and the ever-increasing difficulty of raising money, Charles and his ministers deemed it advisable to make overtures for peace to the United Provinces.

At the same time Louis, anxious to prosecute his designs on the Spanish Netherlands, reopened negotiations with this country by sending Lord St. Albans to London with the object of obtaining a renewal of the promise, formerly made by Charles, of abstention from interference in the campaign in the Low Countries.

The English King falling in with these views, on the understanding that the French fleet should not co-operate with the Dutch, secretly made the required compact, and a conference for the purpose of arranging terms of peace met at Breda in May, 1667.²

Matters at the outset went so smoothly that Louis in the same month wrote: "Peace is signed, in reality all the plenipotentiaries . . . will have to do is to draw up the treaty on paper." Henry Coventry, one of the English envoys, actually landed at Dover on the 7th June, sent over in a Dutch vessel under the white flag, bearing the preliminary articles of peace for the King's signature.³

With, as was considered, the hopes of peace assured and the lack of money pressing more and more severely, Charles and his Council, on the suggestion, it is said, of Sir William Coventry, one of the Commissioners of the Navy, decided to lay up the greater portion of the fleet and to keep only some smaller ships in commission "to distract the enemy and disturb his trade."⁴

The belief that the peace negotiations were practically completed, the dire straits for money which held the Govern-

¹ Pepys, 29th December, 1662; Clarendon, "Life," Vol. III., p. 597.

² Clarendon, "Life," Vol. III., p. 810; Mignet, Vol. II., p. 40.

³ Clarendon, "Life," Vol. III., p. 794.

⁴ "James' Life," p. 425; Evelyn, Vol. II., p. 30.

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ment, and the almost insuperable difficulty of obtaining crews to man the ships—15,000 seamen having been permitted to sail in merchant vessels so as to save their pay and rations¹—were the chief reasons which prompted the Council to take this course.

At the same time a project for the fortification of Sheerness, Tilbury and various strategical points in the Thames basin received consideration and approval.

If these defences had been constructed valid reasons could be advanced in favour of the whole scheme, but the palsy of impecuniosity, together with the chronic apathy and incompetence of the naval and military administration, delayed the construction of the necessary defensive works while proceeding in all haste with that portion of the design which denuded the country of protection against invasion.²

De Witt, ardent to revenge the heavy damage inflicted on the Dutch commerce at the Vlie, and anxious to stimulate the negotiations at Breda, being well aware also of the condition of affairs in England, despatched a fleet under his brother Cornelius which sailed across to Harwich, and then, meeting with no opposition, penetrated up the Thames and Medway as far as Gravesend and Chatham, breaking down the obstructions which Albemarle hastily contrived, and burning several of the largest war-vessels in the British Navy, including the *Royal Charles*, the flagship of the admiral-in-chief.

The Dutch stayed in the river for some weeks, creating widespread alarm and confusion, but troops poured in for the defence of the country-side; the militia were enrolled, and the invaders being repulsed from Landguard Fort, near Harwich, and driven out of the river by fireships in July, finally departed and sailed homeward.

The damage they inflicted was considerable, the insult and shame unparalleled in British annals.

A great outcry arose against those officials whose negligence and incapacity rendered such a disaster possible.

¹ Pepys, 22nd June, 1667.

² Clarendon, "Life," Vol. III., pp. 796 *et passim*.

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Pepys dreaded that the Navy Office might be attacked by the mob, and the whole nation bitterly resented the national disgrace and the official ineptitude which caused it.¹

Contemporary writers placed the blame on Sir William Coventry for giving the advice, but clearly the real responsibility lay with Parliament which failed to provide the necessary funds, with the Council which shut its eyes to the obvious inadequacy of the defensive policy, and with the naval and military authorities who hesitated to act until the blow had fallen.

Later writers have always cast the whole shame upon Charles personally. He is accused of spending the money voted for the fleet on his own immoral pleasures, and is even charged, he and his court together, with frivolous and heartless disregard of the national distress.

As usual the authority is Pepys, who according to custom relates the scandal second-hand: "The night the Dutch did burn our ships the King did sup with Lady Castlemaine at the Duchess of Monmouth's, and they were all mad in hunting of a poor moth."

This gossip is related after the reputed occurrence, but the same chronicler, when the events were actually fresh in his memory, bears distinct testimony to the unceasing activity, deep feeling and heavy anxiety of the King and the complete depression which fell upon the court "where there is hardly anyone but do look as if he cried. The King and the Duke of York have been below (bridge) since four in the morning to command the sinking of ships at Barking Creek. The King and the Duke of York up and down, here and there, some time on Tower Hill where the City Militia was, where the King did make a speech to them that they should venture themselves no further than he would himself. The king and the court are all troubled and the gates of the court are all shut since the coming of the Dutch."²

It is undoubtedly true that the primary cause of the

¹ Pepys, 12th June, 1667; 22nd June, 1667.

² *Ibid.*, 13th June, 1667.

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disgraceful episode at Chatham lay in the deplorable condition of the national finance, but to attribute the bankruptcy of the Exchequer to the extravagance of the King is obviously absurd.

On the assembling of Parliament in September, 1666, Charles, in his Speech from the Throne, put the whole matter of finance in a perfectly clear light: "We have won successes at sea, and if it had not been for the fire we would have been in no ill condition." He told them they had given large supplies, but if he had not anticipated his revenue he "would not have been able to set out the fleet last spring"; and he concluded with saying: "They must be put in mind that war with such powerful enemies could not be maintained without taxes, and he was sure that the money raised came not into his own purse."¹

The receipts of the Exchequer, as shown in Mr. Shaw's essay, clearly demonstrate that in this Charles spoke the truth; that in no case did the amount received equal the debt incurred, and only by heavy borrowings and long deferred payments were the defensive services maintained at all.

But in addition to the financial breakdown another cause existed, and Pepys in one sentence reveals the reason for the catastrophe both at Chatham and elsewhere: "'Tis pretty odd to see how everybody, even at this high time of danger, puts business off of their own hands."²

The incapacity of those in authority lay at the root of much of the trouble of this reign. Bruce in his "Memoirs" declares that there had been "A Lord High Admiral who could not get to sea by reason that the pitch and tar were so offensive to his stomach, a President of Council who by stuttering could not pronounce one single word plain, a first Commissioner of the Treasury who could not count ten and a Secretary of State who could neither read nor write."³ This is a highly-coloured picture, yet it is an

¹ Journals of Lords and Commons.

² Pepys, 14th June, 1667.

³ Aylesbury Memoirs.

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assured fact that many of the administrative officers in all respects failed in their duty. “‘What shall we do,’ says my Lord Treasurer. ‘Why, what means all this? I have given all I can, for my life. Why, will not people lend their money? Why do our prizes come to nothing which yielded so much before.’”¹

Poor Lord Treasurer! He suffered many trials; all this onerous work went greatly against the grain, for he liked his ease and let matters slip; “if he can get his £8,000 a year and a game at l’Ombre he is well. My Lord Chancellor minds getting of money and nothing else; my Lord Ashley will rob the devil and the altar, but he will get money if ’tis to be got.”

Many officials were corrupt as well as apathetic. Pepys himself once a month openly counts the profit he has gained from illicit sources; Pett, made the scapegoat of more guilty men, caused coffins to be cut out of mainmasts of vessels; Lord Ashley sold stores found in prizes and put the money into his own pocket. “Surely,” said one who knew, “unless the King had the wealth of the Mogul he would be a beggar to have the business ordered as it is now.”²

The system of payment in the fleet was as bad as bad could be.

Instead of pay the crews of the vessels received tickets—promissory notes in fact—to be cashed when convenient to the authorities.

A traffic consequently sprang up in these tickets; speculators bought them at a large reduction in their nominal value, the miserable sailors, not having the wherewithal to sustain their starving wives and families, gladly seizing any opportunity of getting cash even though the amount might not be half that to which they were justly entitled.³

These tickets were also frequently forged and money obtained by false pretences.

Lord Chancellor Clarendon, sitting at the Council table,

¹ Pepys, 12th April, 1665; 23rd April, 1663.

² *Ibid.*, 8th September, 1665; 10th April, 1667.

³ *Ibid.*, 18th June, 1667 *et passim*.

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writes a note (a favourite habit of his—"he liked letters better than venison") and passes it to the King: "Have you heard of the jolly lot of rogues who are lately taken and now in jail for counterfeiting hands at the Navy Office?"

To which Charles with his usual cynical good humour replies: "Yes! and your friend James Apsley is one of them. It's a pity there's not a law to hang such rogues; they deserve it better than a poor pickpocket."¹

The people thought so too. They attacked the Navy Office and blacked the eyes of the unfortunate clerk they found there, who, not unnaturally, thought that if anybody must be assaulted it should be one of the commissioners and not the clerk, at which opinion there was "mighty quarrelling."

The nation wanted peace; therefore the envoys at Breda received instructions to adopt a conciliatory tone, and peace was concluded on the 31st July, 1667.

Louis lent his good offices; in his judgment the suitable moment had arrived for prosecuting his designs on Les Pays Bas, not with diplomacy alone, but by a judicious application of the mailed fist ("*pour exercer a main armée*"), and to do this successfully he needs must obtain the neutrality of Great Britain.²

Although the war concluded in a manner most derogatory to the reputation of British arms, yet the country on the whole gained by the treaty at Breda.

While only relinquishing its claims to the little island of Polaroon ("to quarrel about Polaroon would be to give up a dinner for the sake of mustard," said Temple) and some other unimportant places, it gained possession of the whole coast of America from the frontiers of Florida to the Gulf of St. Lawrence.³

It is highly characteristic of the injustice done to Charles and to some of the men who administered affairs in his reign that, while every school child has been taught that the

¹ Clarendon, State Papers, p. 48.

² Mignet, Vol. I., p. 549; *ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 491.

³ Temple, p. 298.

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disaster at Chatham was due to the depravity of an immoral and extravagant king, only the student of history knows of the Four Days' battle, one of the most splendid instances on record of British pluck and perseverance; and even the average student hardly realises that to the peace of Breda England owes the material commencement of her great colonial empire.

Still, at the time of its consummation, the treaty satisfied no one. "Though this may end in peace, yet I doubt that it will be with so much unkindness between the nations, that it will be wisdom on both sides to think of another (war) as well as to avoid it," wrote Temple to Arlington in July, and his words came true.¹

No Power felt satisfied with the condition of affairs except perhaps France, whose King took the opportunity afforded by the weakness of his neighbours to proceed still further on his long meditated design.

Six weeks before the conclusion of peace Louis poured a numerous army into the Spanish Netherlands, not for the purpose of conquest, but only to "diffuse the sweet influence of abundance and peace," as he benigantly explains in a manifesto to the provinces occupied by his forces.²

Spain naturally resisted; Holland moreover, mistrusting the pacific intentions of the Most Christian King, strenuously endeavoured to rouse a combination of European Powers against the French aggression, feeling herself too weak, after the long war, to combat the power of France with only the assistance of decadent Spain.

Louis, well aware of the jealousy with which his pretensions were viewed by his Continental neighbours, hastened to obtain the assistance of England, which country old Mazarin always regarded as the natural ally of France.

In August the Marquis Ruvigny, a French Protestant and a personal friend of both Clarendon and the Duke of York, received his appointment as a special ambassador, and after a somewhat stormy voyage, the equinoctial

¹ Temple, Vol. I., p. 299.

² Miguet, Vol. II., p. 63; *ibid.*, pp. 505, 512 *et passim*.

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gales raging in the Channel, reached England on the 8th September.

Ruvigny, to his dismay, on arriving at London, found his friend Clarendon disgraced and dismissed, while Arlington, who had married a Dutch lady, controlled affairs.

Moreover, he discovered that all things French were regarded with great disfavour; "*la jalousie est terrible*" he pathetically remarked.

Charles, however, received him with kindness, granted him a two-hour audience, expressed a warm attachment to France and a strong desire for her friendship, but refused to make any definite propositions, saying that such should come from his Most Christian and Royal brother.

Ruvigny, a keen sighted diplomatist, nevertheless felt justified in hinting to his master that obviously Charles desired three things—money, of which he stood in dire need, some concessions with regard to trade, which the nation highly appreciated, and a portion of such conquests as Louis might gain in Flanders; but, the ambassador continued, the original proposition that both England and France should enrich themselves at the expense of the House of Austria, the one in the West Indies, the other in Europe, in no way would prove acceptable either to Charles, his Parliament, or his people.

After prolonged discussion, in which Arlington and Buckingham represented the King, the English terms, according to Ruvigny, took the form of a demand for the cession of Ostend and Nieuport; the Duke of Buckingham putting forward as his reason for the latter claim that the King of France should not raise difficulties about ceding these two places after having given Dunkirk to Cromwell, for certainly less consideration should not be paid to a legitimate king than to a usurper.¹

Louis very distinctly replied that he in no way felt inclined to give such a high price for a simple neutrality, and submitted a counter proposition, but Arlington, who sympathised with the Dutch and desired a closer connection with

¹ Mignet, Vol. II., pp. 522, 532, 540.

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them, induced Charles to despatch Sir William Temple, then minister at Brussels, to de Witt at the Hague with proposals for an alliance with the United Provinces.¹

The failure of the negotiations with France placed Charles in a position of some difficulty.

To avoid isolation he must co-operate with one at least of the European Powers.

An alliance with Spain, tottering to her fall, or with Austria, far distant and possessing no common interests, was out of the question. The choice therefore lay between France and Holland.

His predilections, both personal and political, turned towards France, but from the tone of Louis' communications he thought he could discern that that monarch somewhat under-valued the English alliance, and in addition showed but little inclination to afford those commercial advantages which always appealed most directly to the national mind.

On the other hand, Charles clearly saw the danger which existed, that France, as before, might again join hands with Holland and thus cause the isolation which he feared above all things.

He therefore consented to an alternative scheme; himself to coalesce with the United Provinces and so bring pressure to bear upon France and Spain, with the object of inducing both Powers to cease hostilities on the terms already put forward by Louis. This arrangement he hoped would satisfy all parties; consequently he agreed to Arlington's proposal, and Temple, furnished with full credentials, started for the Hague, where he arrived in January, 1668. By most assiduous work Temple accomplished in five days a project which under ordinary circumstances would have taken five weeks, and on the 23rd January the treaty with the States was signed.²

It consisted of three parts—firstly, a defensive alliance by which the contracting Powers bound themselves to aid each other in case of an attack by a third party; secondly,

¹ Temple, Vol. I., pp. 313 *et passim*: Mignet, Vol. II., p. 540.

² Temple, Vol. I., p. 322.

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an undertaking to use all means to persuade, or if necessary compel, Spain to conclude peace ; thirdly, a secret proviso that in the event of Louis refusing to cease hostilities both England and Holland would join Spain in ensuring the carrying out of the terms of the Treaty of the Pyrenees even by force.¹

Charles took a strong personal interest in the proceedings, and on the margin of the draft treaty he wrote in his own hand a note objecting, as an indecent expression, to the word "force" when applied to France should she not readily agree to the proposed stipulations.

Temple, who states that "we first drew it up in French," thereupon modified the original expression "a la force et a la restrainte" to the less objectionable term "aux moyens plus dur," and subsequently to the weaker "aux moyens plus efficace."²

The King of Sweden shortly afterwards signified his willingness to join in the compact, which thus received the name of the Triple Alliance.

Whether induced by the junction of these three Powers or, more probably, by a secret arrangement for the partition of the Spanish inheritance which he had completed with the Emperor, Louis accepted the position of affairs, and in May, 1668, consented to the peace of Aix la Chapelle, by which he agreed to evacuate the province of Franche Comté, just overrun by Condé's victorious forces, but insisted on retaining all the other valuable possessions annexed by him in Flanders.³

Yet the ink of the signatures was scarcely dry on the parchment before doubts were expressed as to the continuity and steps taken to bring about the abrogation of this much vaunted diplomatic instrument.

The English Parliament might belaud the Triple Alliance as a slight to France, but the English King did not attempt to hide his dislike of the whole proceeding and his belief

¹ Temple, Vol. I., p. 340.

² *Ibid.*, p. 321.

³ Mignet, Vol. II., pp. 459, 626.

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that neither he nor his country would reap any benefit from it.

The very day on which the treaty was signed Charles wrote to his sister explaining the effect of the negotiations then concluded. He urged that Spain now consented to terms primarily brought forward by Louis himself :

“ I have done nothing to prejudice France in this agreement, and they cannot wonder that I provide for myself against any mischief which war may produce, and finding my proposition to France receive so cold an answer, which in effect was as good as a refusal, I thought I had no other way but this to secure myself.”¹

In this opinion Charles never changed, nor did he have long to wait before Louis reverted to a more friendly attitude.

Though, doubtless, chagrined at the temporary check, the French King at heart still remained true to the opinion, first uttered by Mazarin, that England should be the constant ally of France. Acting on fresh instructions, Ruvigny now turned a willing ear to the frequent expressions of a desire for a closer friendship, “ a treaty between gentleman and gentleman,” which continually fell from the lips of Charles, and on behalf of his Most Christian master only stipulated that the first overtures should come from the English King.²

In the middle of August Colbert de Croissy, brother to the celebrated finance minister, arrived in England with a high reputation for diplomatic adroitness.

He approached Charles expecting a warm and sympathetic welcome, but to his astonishment met with a distinctly cold reception. This he attributed to Arlington, never, in the opinion of Ruvigny or his colleagues, a true friend to France ; but in reality the cause of Charles's lack of cordiality lay deeper—annoyance at the continued difficulties thrown in the way of the commercial treaty and an awakening jealousy at the increase of the French navy.

¹ “ Madame,” p. 255.

² Dalrymple, Vol. I., p. 70 (edition 1790).

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"There are two impediments in the way . . . to have an intier union, the first is the great applycation there is at this time in France to establish trade and to be very considerable at sea which is so jealous a point to us heere, who can only be considerable by our trade and power at sea. And you cannot chuse but beleieve it must be dangerous to me at home to make an intier league till first the great and principale interest of this nation be secured which is trade. The other difficulty is the treaty I am entered into of late which I am sure the King my brother would not have me violate upon any terms as he himself is such a martire to his word."

Thus Charles writes to his sister, and in almost every letter there are allusions to the intense desire of the nation to extend its trade and its determination to maintain its naval supremacy.¹

Except to those who start with the preconceived notion that Charles II. was in all things the most worthless king and despicable individual that at any time reigned over this country, and who intend to gain corroboration for their theory from his every act and word, his conduct in concluding the Triple Alliance, and also in the subsequent events up to this time, is both natural and sensible.

With the full consent of his Parliament and his people he fought the Dutch in the hopes of wresting from them their maritime ascendancy. He desired to attain for this design the friendship, or at least ensure the neutrality, of Louis and France.

When disappointed in both these aspirations, finding the financial and naval forces of the country weakened and disorganised, he made peace on the best terms he could obtain. That this peace contained the elements of durability nobody believed.

Temple, the author of the alliance, immediately after its conclusion dolefully remarked that it would be wisdom on both sides to think of another war; while Clifford, at that time the most trusted minister, declared "notwithstanding all this joy we must still have another Dutch war."²

¹ "Madame," p. 270.

² Temple, Vol. I., p. 463.

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Yet it cannot be contended that any intention of immediately resuming hostilities entered into the head of either the King or his ministers—the financial condition of the country alone forbade such an idea; and although, following his personal predilections, Charles again turned to France in the hopes of closer and more friendly relations, he did not contemplate breaking the alliance with Holland, and certainly did not write the sentence concerning his desire to keep the treaty and his word “with his tongue in his cheek” as one of his biographers alleges.

Also he showed no duplicity in his negotiation with France. The commercial treaty stood first in his estimation, for he knew full well that Parliament would never consent to any alliance with France except for the purpose of improving the national trade.

Colbert on his first arrival sent to Louis one of those classically designed and voluminous communications, so wittily characterised as “despatches with a portico,” in which in every respect he supported the attitude taken up by Charles, and went so far as unwillingly to admit that the realm of France could in no way compete in naval excellence with England, a country which indeed need not be envious even of Holland, the vast number of vessels on the Thames alone showing numerical superiority over that latter power. He further declares that the English people will only praise or blame any measure according to the advantage or the detriment it might bring to the national commerce, “that idol which is adored in England.”¹

Up to this point the policy of Charles, to unbiassed observers, is logical and even wise. Beyond this, however, exactly the reverse is the case.

No writer on this reign, even with the aid of modern historical research, appears to have a distinct idea of either the sequence or the real intention of subsequent events.

It is certain that both Arlington and Buckingham from personal reasons, but probably with the knowledge of Charles, set on foot schemes of their own concoction for

¹ Mignet, Vol. III., pp. 40, 41.

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bringing about a closer connection with France, these schemes being furtively carried on, neither taking the other into his confidence; Buckingham, through his creature Sir Ellis Leighton and solely for the purpose of enhancing his own reputation, commencing a correspondence with Henriette, the Duchess of Orleans, concerning a renewal of an alliance with the French nation.¹

Arlington, unaware of this project, but knowing the false and frivolous nature of Buckingham, and suspecting an intrigue, secretly approached Colbert with the identical object of establishing more friendly relations with the same country.² But while the subsidiary agents were busy weaving their own nets, Charles himself appears to have opened a great and startling proposition which, whatever form it may ultimately have attained, in its inception appeared, ostensibly at least, as a scheme for the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in England with the aid, if necessary, of French military assistance. Together with this religious movement a full offensive and defensive alliance with France against Holland was contemplated.

Frequently before this time Charles expressed a strong desire that his sister Henriette should pay him a visit; now, while reiterating the wish, he also explained that such visit would afford a convenient opportunity of discussing with her personally, without any intermediary, a scheme of great importance and secrecy.

A French gentleman in the King's suite, Monsieur de Flamaren, hinted this wish to Colbert, who at first treated it as a piece of impertinent interference, but when Buckingham also evidently concurred in the idea the ambassador, through his brother the finance minister, communicated it to Monsieur de Lionne, the foreign secretary. Difficulties, however, arose, and the matter remained for a time in abeyance.³

Such plots and counterplots naturally engendered sus-

¹ Dalrymple, Vol. I., p. 69; "James' Life," p. 444.

² Dalrymple, Vol. I., p. 96; "James' Life," p. 444.

³ Miguet, Vol. III., p. 59.

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picion ; indeed, at one time the constant coming and going of Lord St. Albans " made such a noyse as set people talking about some great proposition from France." ¹

The necessity of a more secret means of communication with his English brother became apparent to Louis.

Instead, however, of Madame he chose a strange agent.

A Theatine monk, " taken from his cloister and made an abbé at the suggestion of the Electress of Bavaria," received the royal commands to journey to England and establish confidential relations with Charles. This abbé, Pregnani by name, possessed many curious qualifications for such secret service.

His knowledge of astrology caused him to be very popular with the ladies of Paris, whose fortunes he told with marked success ; even the Duke of Monmouth, on a visit to Madame, could be reckoned among his clients and had his horoscope cast.

Pregnani, moreover, professed a knowledge of chemistry, an acquisition which specially commended him to Charles, who delighted in such pursuits and spent, as Pepys tells us, much time in his laboratory. ²

Both the seclusion of the place of meeting and the nature of the pursuit would, it was surmised, furnish frequent opportunities for private conversation without the inconvenient presence of listeners or the risk of exciting suspicion.

But in sending such an emissary Louis misjudged the character of Charles, who, as Halifax said of him, when " men had chinks could see through them as soon as any man about him," and certainly very quickly saw through the shallow abilities of this clerical charlatan.

" I give little credit to such kinde of cattle and the lesse you do it the better," he told his sister. In fact with characteristic irony he placed the " profett " in a somewhat invidious position by taking him down to Newmarket and insisting upon an astrological forecast as to the winning horses at the race meetings then taking place.

¹ " Madame," p. 287.

² Mignet, Vol. III., p. 74.

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The unfortunate abbé fared no better than an ordinary tipster, for Charles relates with glee: "He lost his money upon confidence that the starres could tell what horse would win, for he had the ill-luck to foretell three times wrong together and James (Duke of Monmouth) beleevved him so much as he lost his money upon the same score."

As, moreover, the King did not confide any secrets or establish confidential relations, Louis soon recalled the luckless astrologer, while Charles, with his usual good nature, sent a message to Henriette asking her to continue her patronage to the "poor abbé who felt greatly troubled for feare the railleries about the horse match may have done him harm, so hinder all you can any prejudice coming to him on that score, for the man has wit enough and is as much your servant as possible which makes me love him."¹

However devious the path the King might be pursuing, there was always a tender thought in Charles's heart for "deare Minette."

But while Charles amused himself with the egregious Pregnani, he by means of another messenger made definite efforts to advance what he called "*la grande affaire*." In January, 1669, James, Duke of York, confided to his brother, the King, that after serious study and long consultation with the Jesuit father, Simons, he desired to be received into the Roman Catholic Church.

According to James's account of the matter, the King not only gave his consent but, at a private meeting in the duke's room at St. James, in the presence of Lord Arundel, Arlington and Sir Thomas Clifford, declared his own wish to profess the same faith and asked for advice as to the methods most suitable for the "settling of the Catholic religion in his kingdoms."²

Those present, with much consultation, decided that the best way of proceeding would be in conjunction with France and by the assistance of the Most Christian King.

In accordance with this counsel, Lord Arundel and Sir

¹ "Madame," pp. 283 *et passim*.

² "James' Life," pp. 441 *et passim*.

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Richard Bellings, a noted Irish Catholic, shortly afterwards journeyed to Paris, and Charles, in the very letter describing the advent of Pregnani, tells Henriette that Lord St. Albans had also departed to the French court, fully instructed in the whole matter for the information of the others.

The two peers, acting as intermediaries, St. Albans passing backwards and forwards from France to England as occasion required, conducted the negotiations by word of mouth; this absence of epistolary evidence adding greatly to the difficulty of those who endeavour to trace these transactions.

Louis strongly desired that his ambassador Colbert, in whose ability and adroitness he greatly confided, should be made cognisant of the whole affair, but this for a time Charles equally strenuously resisted. He evidently objected to an increase in the number of those possessing knowledge of the subject and strove to keep the matter as secret as possible.¹

Yet in such intrigues some leakage is sure to occur. The journeys of Lord St. Albans provoked remark to such an extent that Colbert informed his master public opinion now declared that an alliance would shortly be completed "sold by one King, paid for by the other."

Being in complete ignorance of the whole design Colbert exercised all his diplomacy in widening the breach which existed between Charles and his Parliament, trusting by this means to coerce the English monarch into throwing himself into the arms of France. To avoid the dangerous inconvenience of such proceedings Louis pressed for permission to confide the whole matter to his envoy, and when, after some delay, the necessary consent arrived, Colbert received instructions to approach Charles with certain definite propositions of financial and military aid, but to urge with his utmost persistence the necessity for the declaration of war against the United Provinces preceding the attempt to convert England to the Roman Catholic Church.²

To all these efforts Charles turned a deaf ear and insisted

¹ "Madame," p. 282; Mignet, Vol. III., p. 91.

² Mignet, Vol. III., p. 98.

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that the religious crusade should be inaugurated before hostilities commenced.

For many months the negotiations continued ; Arlington and Colbert indeed formulated the bases of a treaty, but the detailed provisos caused endless discussion. The English King, while willing to receive pecuniary supplies and military aid, especially the former, for his own purposes, showed also a great determination to obtain substantial territorial concessions and important trading advantages for his kingdom. At the same time he with continuous obstinacy persisted in his objection to take part in the Dutch war until after the settlement of the religious question. Louis, on the other hand, displayed equal unwillingness to allow the question of hostilities to be deferred to some undetermined date ; so towards the end of 1669 the treaty still remained unsigned and in abeyance.

Parliament met in February, 1670 ; immediately it proceeded to its accustomed business of harrying some religious sect, this time the Protestant Dissenters, and also turned its attention to an investigation of the charges of financial maladministration during the late war.

Probably to the surprise of the Commons Charles gave his consent to the two resolutions, and then earnestly requested the House to consider the great injury to the country which resulted from the heavy weight of the National Debt. His plea succeeded ; a substantial subsidy from the wine dues was voted, and, as Colbert writes to Louis : " The King finds himself in a better condition than at any other time since his return to his realm." ¹

Fearful that this accretion of revenue might render Charles more independent, Louis, being fully cognisant of a design of Holland to draw the Emperor into the Triple Alliance, increased his offers, only to meet with enlarged demands, for Charles, however willing he might be to receive subsidies, showed no alacrity either in preparing for war or in commencing the religious conversion of his subjects.

¹ " Parliamentary History," p. 446 ; Mignet, Vol. III., pp. 123, 154.



PRINCESS HENRIETTA, SISTER OF CHARLES II.
From the Painting in Exeter Guildhall.

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He insisted on the money for the subsidy being paid in specie in London, not by "lettres de change" negotiable at Paris. In this demand he certainly showed sound judgment, the scarcity of coin in England at that time being abnormal largely owing to the continual export of silver, a most lucrative practice of the ring of bankers who then held the country in financial fetters.¹

Much as Colbert disliked this claim yet he conceded it, only to find others arising. In this difficulty the ambassador again bethought himself of the passionate desire expressed by Charles, some time before, to see his sister Henriette.

He at once impressed this point on Louis, who, knowing that Madame was well versed in all the intricacies of the various intrigues and believing that no one in the world exercised such influence over the English King as his graceful fair-haired sister, at once agreed to the request.

He also brought all his royal influence to bear upon Monsieur, his brother, the Duc d'Orléans, who behaved, as usual, like a spoilt child; but finally, all difficulties being overcome, on the 24th May Henriette, attended by a magnificent train of 237 persons including the Count and Countess de Grammont, embarked on board the English fleet under Lord Sandwich, and early the next morning came in sight of the white cliffs of Dover.

As the vessel approached the English shore a small boat could be seen rapidly rowing towards her, and Madame, hastening on deck, knew that her brother Charles had come in person to welcome "my dearest Minette" back to her native country.²

Nine years had past since she saw the land of her birth; in less than nine weeks she lay dead.

But in the management of the affairs entrusted to her, by the tact and ability she showed, all went smoothly, and on the 1st June, 1670, the celebrated Treaty of Dover—"La Traité de Madame," as it is called after the accomplished woman who effected it—was signed by Colbert for France,

¹ Mignet, Vol. III., p. 172.

² "Madame," p. 331; Mignet, Vol. III., p. 184.

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Arlington, Arundel, Clifford, and Bellings on behalf of England.¹

The French copy of this historical document, contrary to the declaration of Lingard, is to be found in the *Depôt de Traités*, Archives des Affaires Étrangères in Paris ; the English counterpart now lies in the library at Ugbrook, the Devonshire home of Lord Clifford of Chudleigh, the direct descendant of the minister who signed it.

Smoothly and agreeably as matters proceeded yet hardly more than a month elapsed before not only the treaty itself but also the friendly relations between the two kingdoms came perilously near being broken and destroyed.

On her journey to England Henriette showed signs of illness. Her suite noticed that she always seemed weary, frequently lay down, and took for sustenance little but milk.

During the festivities with which Charles entertained his sister, the trips to Canterbury, the ballets, comedies and feasts, the yacht excursions and other rejoicings with which the court celebrated the anniversary of the Restoration and paid homage to their royal guest, Henriette seemed to have regained her health, and did her part with such winsome grace as charmed the hearts of all.

At last the hour of departure arrived and brother and sister took leave of each other, Charles being affected even to tears at parting.² He loaded "Minette" with presents, gave her money and jewels, and even sailed a portion of the way in her company. Then he left her and she went away alone to join her sullen and neglectful husband.

On the 25th June all noticed the traces of illness on her face. The next morning, overcome with the intense heat, she most imprudently bathed in the Seine ; two days after, having drunk a glass of chicory water, suddenly spasms of pain seized her, and she continued in fits of agony until at 3 in the morning on the 30th June she died.³

¹ Mignet, Vol. III., p. 187 ; "James' Life," p. 442.

² Mignet, Vol. III., p. 207.

³ "Madame," pp. 344 *et passim* : "James' Life," p. 451.

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Such a sudden catastrophe inevitably excited suspicion.

It was the age of poisoners. Madame le Voisin and le Sage sold "succession" powders to expectant heirs whose hopes of succeeding to desired estates might be too long delayed by the inconvenient vitality of those whose possessions they coveted. Henriette herself in the first paroxysms cried out, "I am poisoned!" Others who saw her in her agony reiterated the accusation; small wonder, therefore, that the suspicion became general, that Charles execrated the despicable Monsieur, that Buckingham raged like a furious madman and the London mob howled for war at the gates of the French Embassy.

Now medical testimony declares that she suffered from peritonitis or a penetrating intestinal ulcer, and probably, even in those days of medical incompetence, the evidence pointing to death by natural causes must have been strong, for Charles, though inconsolable for a while and quite ready to avenge his "deare, deare sister," subsequently tried his best to allay the national resentment and courteously replied to the undoubtedly sincere expression of grief which Louis wrote to him.¹

The treaty, which is still known by the name of the fair-haired girl who played such an important part in its conclusion, "*La Traité de Madame*," after the usual preliminaries—concerning which, however, considerable friction arose, as Charles insisted on being described by his ancestral titles, King of England, France and Ireland, a difficulty only terminating by Louis giving way to the "absurd formality"—declared:

That at the time most suitable in his opinion, the King of Great Britain being convinced of the truth of the Catholic religion should be reconciled to the Roman Church and consequently should receive the sum of two million of livres tournois (about £150,000) and the assistance of 6,000 troops, should such change of religion endanger the internal tranquillity of the kingdom. That Louis should observe the Treaty of Aix la Chapelle and Charles be permitted to main-

¹ Mignet, Vol. III., pp. 203, 213.

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tain that treaty in conformity with the Triple Alliance. That, if any new rights over the Spanish monarchy should accrue to the Most Christian King, Charles should assist him in maintaining them. That both Kings should declare and carry on war against the United Provinces to "abate the power of a nation which is so often blackened by extreme ingratitude." For this purpose Great Britain to provide an army of 6,000 men to be maintained by Louis, and also to supply a fleet consisting of not less than fifty first-class vessels and ten frigates (*bruslots*), the French supplying thirty "good ships" carrying 40 cannons a-piece and a sufficient number of frigates; the whole to be under the command of the Duke of York. To assist in sustaining the charge of this fleet an annual sum of three million livres (£225,000) should be paid by France. Certain advantages should be given to the Prince of Orange, the nephew of the King of Great Britain, which monarch should also obtain possession of the isle of Walcheren, the island of Cadsand and Sluys, when conquered. That neither monarch should make peace without the consent of the other, and that, in the interest of both realms, the treaty of commerce already negotiated should be concluded.

No mention is made of the priority of Charles's conversion to Catholicism to the declaration of war, but there is reason to believe that Henriette obtained from him a promise that he would defer such pronouncement until after the commencement of hostilities.¹

The Duke of York did not attend the earlier conferences, being detained in London by the fear that disturbances might there arise on the date of the first enforcement of the Conventicle Act.

In his "Life" he complains that during his absence Henriette "caused all former measures to be broken and the resolution taken to begin out of hand with the war with Holland," thus corroborating the statement that Charles intended to defer the announcement of his conversion.²

This treaty by some writers on history is deemed the most indelible stain among the many blots of Charles's career—a judgment not altogether justifiable.

¹ Mignet, Vol. III., p. 187; Lingard, Appendix.

² "James' Life," p. 449.

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The treaty consisted of two parts ; that concerning the private projects of Charles and that relative to the interest of his kingdom at large.

In the strenuous race for commercial and naval supremacy the English people were more interested than their King. Mocenigo, the Venetian envoy, gave as his opinion that England must either give up her trade with the East Indies or her peace with Holland.¹ The hatred of the Dutch had, if anything, increased since the late war, the shame of Chatham and pressure of trade competition causing a deep and abiding irritation in the heart of the nation ; the war with Holland therefore, when it ensued, met with the popular approbation, even though subsequent events may have shown the unwisdom of the act.

It is not probable that Charles gave much thought to that *Fata Morgana*, the balance of power in Europe, a theory which has cost more blood and treasure than any other political conception, but he undoubtedly saw the folly of attempting to bolster up the rapidly waning power of Spain, and he infinitely preferred the friendship of Louis, kindred in blood, allied in thought and habits, to any connection with the Emperor or other German princes with whom neither he nor his people possessed anything in common except the Protestant religion, and to that Charles personally retained no warm affection.

That France could rival England in either of those great objects so near the heart of the British nation, commercial and naval supremacy, never entered into the head of Charles. He knew well, what even the French ambassador felt constrained to admit, that neither the natural harbours nor the habits of the maritime population would ever enable the French people to dispute the sovereignty of the seas with Great Britain.²

It is possible, also, that there may be some foundation for Temple's suggestion that Charles would be willing to see France and Holland embroiled, two powerful neighbours

¹ Ranke, Vol. III., p. 492.

² Mignet, Colbert to Louis.

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mutually weakening each other, whilst he, abstaining from any active steps, remained an interested onlooker. Charles, as the testimony of many shows, knew more of foreign affairs than any of his ministers, and the efforts France had lately been making both to increase her commerce and augment her navy, although it may not have seriously aroused his alarm, most certainly excited his jealousy. He may have foreseen that which afterwards occurred ; that by the exhaustion of the other combatants England would absorb the greater portion of the then existent trade. Besides, he shared most heartily his people's dislike to the Dutch, and only refrained from war with them because of the disordered condition of his finances.

But by this treaty the cost of the war fell on his ally, while at the same time the English people would reap considerable benefit should the contest end in their favour.

Their pride was flattered, their superiority at sea conceded by the appointment of the Duke of York as commander-in-chief ; " no English captain will serve under a French commander," said Charles to Colbert, who promptly reported the remark to Louis, and the supreme command of the combined squadrons remained in English hands.

The cession of Walcheren, Sluys and Cadsand yielded the possession of the mouths of the Scheldt, and gave access to the great trading centres of Europe, while the conclusion of the commercial treaty added largely to the material advantages which the previous provisos afforded.

In this direction the effect of the Treaty of Dover is plain enough, and distinctly not unfavourable to the interests of England.

It is the elucidation of the clauses relative to the religious position which substantiates the assertion of Dalrymple that of all English sovereigns the reign of Charles is the most difficult to describe accurately.

It is easy enough to advance theories, but they can only be proved by reconciling absurdities.

If Charles intended by means of foreign money and

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foreign arms to force on his people a religion they detested, the language does not contain words sufficiently strong to anathematise his conduct.

But when it is remembered how earnestly he strove to regain his throne, how frequently and bluntly he expressed his intention to retain that throne, when the essentials of his character are considered, no matter whether favourably or unfavourably, it is incomprehensible that he should suddenly risk all he most valued for the sake of initiating a religious crusade. His long exile afforded him plentiful opportunities of observing the intolerance of the British people in such matters ; since his restoration to his father's crown all his troubles arose from the determination of his Parliament to maintain the National Church in her fullest authority, and yet it is gravely advanced by learned writers that this cynical libertine—as almost without exception they represent him to be—in a sudden outburst of religious hysteria meant to imperil all he held most dear for the purpose of forcing on a reluctant nation that one of the many religious creeds professed in his kingdom which, as he had ample reason to know, his people especially abhorred.

Although undoubtedly reconciled to the Roman Church on his death-bed, by no means has it been proved that at any time during his life he entered her communion or professed her creed ; indeed the evidence is all the other way, for it is shown by excellent authority that he partook of the sacrament in the English Church on many occasions during his reign.

On Easter Day, 30th February, 1684, rather less than a year before his death, in the chapel at Whitehall, Charles, together with three of his natural sons, the Dukes of Northumberland, Richmond and St. Albans, attended the Communion service, “ went up to the altar, the King kneeling before the altar, made his offering, the bishops first received, and then his Majesty.”¹

Such is the evidence of Evelyn, given with much circumstantial detail, and it is conclusive on the point that, less than

¹ Evelyn, Vol. II., p. 205.

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twelve months before his decease, Charles II. openly declared himself a member of the Anglican Church.

Those who knew him best—Mulgrave, Ormonde, Burnet—describe him as uncertain in his religious belief (a Deist he is called), and his whole life afforded an unbroken chain of reasons why he should feel no strong bias towards any special school of religious thought.

He saw his father using the royal prerogative to foist certain observances of the Church of England on a reluctant people, a section of whom so violently resented the aggression that, when the opportunity arrived, they decapitated the archbishop who acted as chief instrument and rebelled against the King who supported him.

He then beheld the Church of England itself despoiled and depressed by those whom it had once held in subjection.

In Ireland Roman Catholics slew Protestants with savage cruelty, then Protestantism, when it gained the upper hand, retaliated in a manner so ruthless as to cast a slur on Christianity. In Scotland the narrowness and bigotry of Presbyterianism disgusted his vivacity and revolted his tolerance of mind. "Presbyterianism is no religion for a gentleman," he once caustically remarked, and the reaction from a sour fanaticism drove him to the fashionable philosophy of Hobbes.

The faithful service rendered to his father by Roman Catholics, the self-sacrificing risks run by the humble members of the same faith to help him in his escape from Worcester fight, certainly most favourably predisposed Charles towards them. "Rebel for rebel, I prefer a Papist to a Presbyterian,"¹ he told Clarendon. Yet no proof is forthcoming that he sincerely intended to enter that Church and face the sacrifices necessary for the taking of such a step.

The chief evidence of such intention is found in the description of a reputed interview with his brother James, when the latter having announced his conversion, "Charles with tears in his eyes," so James declared, also expressed a

¹ Clarendon, State Papers, p. 40.

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wish to proclaim openly the same faith, and then discussed the best means of turning the national opinion in a similar direction.¹

How far the Memoirs of James, in which the account of this interview occurs, consist of his own opinions and how much of the reflection of his reverend biographer it is difficult now to determine, but under all circumstances allowance must be made for the obstinate bias of James's nature, and there are many reasons why his narration of matters relative to his brother's life, and especially to that brother's religious opinion, should be received with caution if not with distrust.

There are some writers who believe that Charles always tacitly held the doctrines of Catholicism, and they lay great stress on a reputed discovery in the archives of the Jesuit College at Rome of certain documents which purport to prove that Bellings, one of the signatories of the "*Traité de Madame*," journeyed to Rome in 1662 and laid before the Pope a formal proposal of the terms on which the British King and his people were prepared to be reconciled to the Roman Church.

The proposals took the form of a profession of faith and a paper of explanations in twenty-five articles. These explanations not proving satisfactory to the Supreme Pontiff, Bellings returned to England for further information, but, the matter getting noised abroad, it was postponed to a more favourable occasion.²

In 1668 the attempt was renewed, Charles writing to the general of the Jesuits, Oliva, requesting that a certain young novice called James de la Cloche might be sent to England to converse with the King on theological matters. This young novice is reputed to have been the illegitimate son of Charles himself, born to him when, as a boy of sixteen, he sojourned for a short time in Jersey, the name of the mother, used by the son, de la Cloche, being that of a noble family of the island.

¹ "James' Life," p. 442.

² *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1885; Lord Acton's "Historical Essays"; G. Boero, "Istoria della Conversione alla Chiesa Cattolica di Carlo II., Ré d'Inghilterra."

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Even if these allegations and statements are authentic, they yet are capable of explanation.

In the year 1662 Charles earnestly endeavoured to abate the polemical strife which embittered his country and strove to establish a comprehensive toleration. The same object was pursued by him, in a less degree, in 1668.¹

Although, during his sojourn in Scotland, by bitter experience he gained a knowledge of Presbyterianism, and by his dreary exile in France and Flanders an extensive acquaintance with Roman Catholic observance, yet, as is apparent from his whole career, he knew little or nothing of the Church of his native land.

It is probable that when, in his boyhood, he spent some time at Oxford with his father he may have met and seen English divines who used the ritual which Archbishop Laud thought fit to practise in the Anglican Church. To his mind, essentially careless in such matters—he frequently expressed his thanks to Nature for allowing him to sleep at sermon time—the sameness in certain points of Church observance might easily imply a like similarity in essential doctrine. It can only be some such train of thought which induced him, as Colbert relates, to suggest that the Pope should allow the English laity to communicate in both kinds, bread and wine, and that the mass should be said in the vulgar tongue, as these concessions in his opinion would certainly facilitate union between the Roman and the Anglican Churches.²

Ranke states that there is a paper in the archives at Paris bearing date the month of February, 1663, addressed to the Roman See and making propositions similar to the above, and he draws the following deduction; “This scheme is mainly remarkable as showing what was the real nature of the design for bringing England back to Catholicism which was so much talked over under Charles II. It aimed, not at a complete restoration of the papal authority, but at removing the schism while it retained as far as possible

¹ “Parliamentary History,” pp. 260, 413.

² Dalrymple, Vol. I., p. 49; Hallam, Vol. II., p. 522.

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the independence of the Anglican Church.”¹ Such a scheme, political in essence, would commend itself to the type of mind which Charles possessed, more especially if, by ingratiating him with the King of France, it advanced schemes in which he was deeply interested and brought pecuniary assistance, of which he stood sadly in need.

On the other hand, if Charles undertook the conversion of his people from conscientious motives, if he plunged into this serious religious undertaking driven by the prickings of a suddenly awakened conscience, surely some indication would be seen in his letters to his sister, the one person in the world to whom he confided all his aspirations.

Henrietta Maria, his mother, and Henriette, his beloved sister, were both devout and religious women.

That they ardently desired Charles's conversion is certain. Surely, therefore, in his letters to the latter some glimmerings would appear of his own state of spiritual unrest. But although he alludes to current political topics, keeps up an interested correspondence on small personal matters, gives thanks for the gloves which smell so nicely, admires the petticoats (a ruling passion) which his sister sent, there are only two or three references to matters which have the slightest connection with religion, and these references are couched in a frivolous and jocose tone.

He complains that he has not received certain letters, as the bearer was drowned between Havre and Portsmouth. “I hear Mam sent me a present by him which brought him ill-luck, so she ought in conscience to be at the charges of praying for his soul.”

Again, when the health of Henriette caused great anxiety to her friends, upon her recovery he remarked: “I will not go about to decide between Mam's masses and Doctor Mayerne's pills . . . though you find yourself very well now, for God's sake have a care of your diett.”²

These remarks savour more of the philosophy of St. Evremonde than the doctrine of St. Peter. With the excep-

¹ Ranke, Vol. III., pp. 398, 400.

² “Madame,” pp. 263, 285.

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tion of these pleasantries and one or two allusions to the "great affair" or the "great secret," Charles never mentions the religious creed to which he was soon to become a convert or refers to the serious religious task to which he is about to set his hand. It is true he speaks concerning the "Church lands," but in this instance, as in others, the reference is either general or political.

Moreover, Henriette herself, undoubtedly a fervent Catholic, does not urge her brother to hurry on with his design; she does not encourage him to persevere in the preparation for his change of faith; on the contrary, her whole endeavour is to restrain and retard any action he might take until after the declaration of war with Holland.

It may be said, with a degree of truth, that all arguments against the sincerity of Charles's conviction are mere deductions against which can be placed his own solemn declarations in the treaty.

True, but the treaty was a political instrument, and the spring and fountain of Charles's proposed conversion was political also.

He wanted money; by the profession of Catholicism and his promise to bring his people into the same communion he believed that he could extract pecuniary assistance from the Most Christian King, whose attachment to the Catholic faith was undoubted.

The first clauses of the treaty, those relating to the religious question, afforded to Charles two material advantages, one of which he sorely needed; on the other he had set his heart. Firstly, he obtained a prompt and generous supply of money; secondly, an opportunity of putting into execution a long premeditated design.

When Parliament after the Restoration, still remembering the action of Cromwell, decreed that the new model army should be disbanded and took measures to put this decision into effect, Charles privately told his old friend, General Marsin, that as soon as the disbandment took place he intended at his own expense to create and maintain another

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army. Contrary to Clarendon's advice he persisted in this determination.¹

Monck's Regiment of Infantry was turned into the King's Companies of Coldstreamers and the squadrons of horse became the Gentlemen of the Life Guards. In his greatest financial embarrassments he always found money to pay these troops ; despite the bitter antagonism of Parliament, he took every opportunity of adding to their number and efficiency.²

But the cost pressed heavily upon the impoverished treasury.

Shortly before the coming of Madame the officials of the Exchequer strove to effect reductions in the expenses and to rearrange the Civil List. Ralph, in his "History," gives a tabulated statement of expected receipts and intended payments, which shows that, even if the estimated income came into the King's coffers, which it never did, the surplus available for all other purposes only amounted to £33,000 per annum after the maintenance of the necessary national services and royal establishments.

First among the charges to be defrayed from this meagre sum is the pension to those who aided the King's escape after Worcester, a claim he never failed to meet ; and the item which stands second on the list is the "Coldstreamers."³

Two hundred thousand pounds sterling per annum would materially assist Charles in promoting this favourite measure ; a mere declaration of adhesion to a certain form of religious worship, "a different fashion of the same cloak," would hardly deter him from obtaining such a useful replenishment of his well-nigh empty pockets.

Moreover, the treaty provided a logical excuse for extending his military establishment. In the time of the Commonwealth certain English regiments were raised for service abroad ; these "redcoats" under Lockhart greatly distinguished themselves, especially at the Battle of the Dunes,

¹ Ranke, Vol. III., p. 337.

² Fortescue, "British Army," p. 290.

³ Ralph's "History," Vol. IV., p. 176.

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and actually fought against the forces led by James, Duke of York, at that time in the Spanish service.

In 1662, after Venner's rebellion, Charles requested Louis to allow one of these regiments, Douglas' Scottish Foot, to come to England and assist in securing the safety of himself and his authority.

Louis assenting, the troops came over, but shortly after returned to France.

In 1670, subsequent to the signing of this Treaty of Dover, once more the redcoats crossed the Channel, this time to remain in the British service and to head the honoured list of British infantry as the 1st Regiment of Foot or the Royal Scots.¹

Such a body of trained veterans proved a valuable increment to Charles's small army, and the necessity of furnishing the stipulated contingent of 6,000 men again provided opportunities for recruiting of which he fully availed himself.

The welcome pecuniary aid, affording means of increasing and maintaining a military force which added to his sense of security and at the same time supplied the power of sustaining his prerogative should such an emergency arise, was quite sufficient inducement to a man of Charles's temperament and character to make any profession, religious or otherwise, which entailed on him no heavier responsibility than the odium attached to evading his word.

And in this he but followed the evil example of the times.

Dissimulation, repudiated engagements, devious intrigues, even direct corruption marked much of the policy and public life of the period.

"This is not the age for a man to follow the strict morality of better times," cynically remarked Halifax to his brother, and the whole record of political history during the latter half of the seventeenth century shows that other statesmen besides Halifax held this view and acted in accordance with it.²

¹ Fortescue, p. 292; "Madame," p. 282.

² Savile Letters.

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That Charles himself possessed this vice of dissimulation in the highest degree is undoubted. He exercised it to obtain his diplomatic and political ends in exactly the same manner as Oliver Cromwell wrapped himself in a shroud of profound hypocrisy, as John de Witt used the most palpable deceits, as Louis Quatorze suffered no paper engagement or inconvenient stipulation to stay his march towards his coveted goal. Charles practised dissimulation exactly the same as these other rulers, and he is to be blamed in exactly the same proportion as reprobation attaches to them.

Charles took money from France and applied that money towards the necessary uses of his Government. He did this because, as can be proved from the Exchequer account, the funds derived from taxes voted by Parliament were absolutely insufficient for the assigned purpose ; but there is a vast difference between applying money obtained from foreign sources to the wants of national administration and selling the interests of a nation to a foreign foe. It cannot be justly said that by his connection with France either the material prosperity or the national position of the country he ruled in any way suffered.

On the contrary : for years England held in her hand the balance of power in Europe, while her trade and internal prosperity largely increased, and her naval supremacy became assured ; peace, domestic tranquillity, a great increment of national wealth and well-being may all be attributed to the policy which Charles pursued in foreign affairs, a policy deserving of discriminating praise instead, as has hitherto been applied to it, of indiscriminating blame.¹

Although owing to the efforts of Madame the treaty bearing her name was successfully completed, yet it placed its English signatories in an embarrassing position.

It would be impossible to attempt to carry out the provisions of the original treaty without communicating all its contents to those ministers who were Protestants, and

¹ Ralph, Vol. IV., p. 843.

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probably also appealing to Parliament. Charles solved the dilemma in an eminently characteristic fashion.

For months past Buckingham, restless, conceited and intriguing, ceaselessly endeavoured on his own behalf to initiate negotiations with France. Colbert hinted the state of affairs to the King, who, upon the duke's suggestion that a mission of condolence on the death of Madame should be sent to the French court, not only gave permission for Buckingham to act as his representative, but also advised that the occasion might be utilised for bringing about more intimate and friendly relations between the two countries. Buckingham, delighted at the opportunity, threw himself with great energy into the project.¹

By a little judicious management and some slight opposition on the part of Arlington and Colbert, Buckingham, in his hurry to distinguish himself, was unconsciously led to propose, as his own conception, many of the provisos of the treaty already secretly arranged. The sum of money allotted to financing Charles's religious venture now figured as a portion of the subsidy for the Dutch war, the amount allocated to this purpose in the second treaty being five million of livres, instead of three as previously arranged. Louis, who never gave away large sums of money without obtaining a proportionate *quid pro quo*, instructed his ambassador to insist on a secret article being attached to the second treaty also, wherein Charles, much to his disgust, perforce declared : " That in the five million livres mentioned in his last treaty for the Dutch war are comprehended also the two million, which are mentioned in the first treaty for our declaring ourselves Catholic." ²

If any further evidence is required to prove that pecuniary necessity, and not religious fervour, caused the Treaty of Dover to be signed, it may be found in this secret article to the second treaty, which shows that Louis himself had a shrewd suspicion that his royal brother of Great Britain felt a greater interest in cash than creeds.

¹ Mignet, pp. 215, 247.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 256 et *passim*.

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Worne and Goree, besides certain possessions of the Dutch in West Africa, were ceded to England in addition to the places mentioned before ; otherwise, with the exception of the financial portion and the omission of all reference to religious matters, the treaties were substantially the same.

Buckingham, eaten up with vanity ("chemist, fiddler, statesman and buffoon," as Dryden calls him), ardently desired to obtain the command of the 6,000 troops, which by both treaties Charles contracted to send as auxiliaries to the French forces ; he therefore by every means in his power, even by personal correspondence with Louis, pressed on the "*Traité Simulé*," as this second instrument is called in the despatch, and finally the King affixed his signature to it on the 2nd February, 1671, and the English commissioners, Buckingham, Arlington, Ashley Cooper, Lauderdale and Clifford, did likewise a few months later, in June of the same year.

Strong suspicions existed both in Holland and England that some such agreement between the countries was in process of hatching.

Temple wrote home that ever since Madame's journey the Dutch have grown jealous "of something between us and France" ; while de Witt not only declared that a distinct coldness in all diplomatic relations had arisen from that visit, but also caustically added that he could not believe that Buckingham's journey to France was only undertaken to "see Paris or learn the language."¹

At home much gossip and equal curiosity arose concerning the comings and goings of the duke and the other commissioners. Anxious to obtain information on a subject of such great interest, the learned president of the Royal Society, Sir Robert Moray, when staying at Windsor, met the King in one of the galleries of the castle and casually observed : "When and where does your Majesty expect to see the Duke of Buckingham again ?"

It is not difficult to imagine the humorous twinkle in

¹ Temple, pp. 162, 168.

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the brilliant eyes and the sudden smile which illuminated the harsh features, as Charles, quite awake to the design of the wily Scotchman, genially replied : " On the Day of Judgment, in the valley of Jehosophat " ; then, having given this non-committal answer, walked quickly away.¹

¹ Lauderdale Papers, p. 201.

CHAPTER IV

CHARLES : HIS CABALS AND HIS CABINETS

HOWEVER abortive in many respects the first Dutch war proved it produced at least one definite result, the dismissal and disgrace of the only great minister who at any time took part in the councils of Charles II.

To Clarendon Charles owed his throne.

By his foresight, his knowledge of men and methods, above all by the self-control and restraint which he not only showed himself but contrived, in a modified degree, to impose on his master and his companions in distress, Edward Hyde did enormous service to the Royal cause and practically made the Restoration possible.

But, with all his talents, he yet remained a minister for adversity and not for success. The unswerving tenacity to certain principles, the dogged courage which clung to the desired object whatever might be the opposition encountered, the reticent self-confidence which took few into its counsels but was quick to profit by the opportunities which others provided, in short, the very qualities which served him and his sovereign best in exile, only produced irritation and enmity when shown by the powerful minister of a restored and prosperous monarch.

It has been truly said of Clarendon that he successfully welded together the old and the new condition of political affairs, and then proved not only incapable of managing, but even of understanding, the result of his handiwork. Clarendon's sagacity and Charles's spirit of toleration produced the Declaration of Breda, without which the Restoration could not have been peaceably effected ; but when once the system of monarchical government again ruled this country, the minister, in opposition to the wishes of the

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King, put on one side the Presbyterians by whom that King had been restored and used his whole power and influence not only to re-establish the Anglican Church in her fullest prerogative and supremacy, but also to harass and distress all other religious bodies which stood apart from her. In carrying out this policy, into which he threw himself with zest and conviction, Clarendon deeply incensed those who, suffering under the penal laws, considered that he had betrayed their interests, but at the same time also he largely increased, at the expense of the King's prerogatives, the power of Parliament, thus preparing the way for his own downfall.

For the House of Commons, and the House of Commons alone, caused the dismissal of the great minister. All the unpopularity which he accumulated would never have made Charles disgrace his old servant had not Parliament shown unequivocal signs that it was determined to effect his ruin.

That Clarendon in seven years managed to incur great odium is obvious. It is possible that he did not deserve much of the opprobrium attached to his name ; he probably was far less corrupt than his colleagues, and, for such an age, may even have kept his hands comparatively clean ; yet the populace, seeing his newly acquired wealth, viewing day by day the building of the ostentatious palace in which he proposed to live and which bore his name, knowing that his daughter had married the heir apparent to the throne, and hearing on all sides the tutelage in which he kept the King, might well agree with the bitter complaint of the popular lampoon :

“ So here in court, church and country far and wide,
There's naught to be seen but Hyde ! Hyde ! Hyde !
Of old and where Law the kingdom divides
'Twas our hides of land, 'tis now our land of Hydcs.”

Every class of society attacked the old statesman ; the Cavaliers complained of his policy, which, while neglecting those who suffered for the Royal cause in person and estate, yet passed an Act of Indemnity and Oblivion for the Roundheads and Sectaries—pardon for the enemy, oblivion for the friend, as was bitterly remarked. The masses of the people

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attributed to him, most unjustly as history shows, the distresses of the Dutch war, the national disgrace at Chatham, and even such diverse calamities as inspired the jibe affixed to the gate-posts of his new palace : "Three sights to be seen : Dunkirk, Tangiers, and a barren Queen."¹ Among his own colleagues, some, William Coventry and Henry Bennett especially, desirous of stepping into his place, lost no opportunity of setting both King and Parliament against the minister who, in their opinion, unduly engrossed far too large a share of power and patronage.²

It is a matter for wonder that Clarendon, so wise and restrained in most respects, should not have seen the inevitable odium which would attach to him consequent on the marriage of his daughter to the Duke of York. In his "Life" he states that he opposed the match and even solicited the King to forbid it³; but practically he took no decisive steps to prevent the marriage, and certainly in no way mitigated the attitude he continuously adopted all his public life of absorbing, as far as possible, the management and conduct of public business.

This constant exercise of authority incurred the envy of his colleagues while creating deep-seated distrust in Parliament, which otherwise approved of the policy he advocated, and the combination of these forces brought about his fall. Like most strong-willed old men he could not recognise that times had changed and that the rising generation held opinions of their own and meant to hold them.

That which Macaulay wrote of him may be true, that "he was the representative of a bygone age, of obsolete methods of thinking, of unfashionable vices and more unfashionable virtues"; if so, he was doubly unfortunate, for his vices lost him the respect of Parliament and the people, while his virtues won him the hatred of the court.

Lady Castlemaine, whom his wife refused to visit, openly rejoiced at his fall; Baptist May, when the Chancellor was

¹ Pepys, 14th June, 1667.

² Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 466; "James' Life," p. 398.

³ Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 50.

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dismissed, congratulated the King on being his own master for the first time. Their malicious influence was undeniable, but unless Charles personally had suffered from the minister's tyranny the mistress and the valet might have chattered in vain.

As a fact, Clarendon's treatment of the King, if we are to believe contemporary writers, lacked not only politeness but common sense; even his son-in-law the Duke of York felt constrained to admit that he "could not excuse the Chancellor of having given occasion by his own misbehaviour towards the King to make his downfall more easily consented to by his Majesty."

In this case Pepys may have chanced to speak the truth when he declared that the court officials talked much of the "Chancellor's neglecting the King and making the King to trot every day to him, when he (the Chancellor) is well enough to visit his cousin Chief Justice Hyde, but not to the Council or the King."¹

From the days of Charles's boyhood Hyde treated him in a "tutorly" manner, a demeanour which he seems to have exhibited to others besides the monarch, for Lord Hatton complains: "The good Chancellor has written in folio and two thirds of it in reproof."²

Yet, although the arbitrary methods of his minister might irritate Charles, although the frequent opposition to his wishes and his policy might eventually cause him to dispense with the counsel of his old servant, it required the action of Parliament to bring about both the dismissal and the disgrace.

Clarendon at times, to further his own ends, encouraged Parliament to assert its powers, yet he took no trouble to influence or propitiate the members, and totally misjudged both the spirit and the intention which actuated it. His long exile, as well as the natural bent of his mind and disposition, prevented him from understanding the new aspect of affairs in the Lower House.

¹ Pepys, 2nd March, 1663; "James' Life," p. 428.

² Nicolas Correspondence, p. 220.

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Step by step the House of Commons strove to establish that system, which, starting in the reign of Charles II., exists to-day, by which Ministers are responsible for their actions not to the Crown alone but also to the Legislature. Charles, with all his pleasure-loving indolence, was far too acute an observer not to perceive the growth of this movement ; when, therefore, it became apparent that not only the court and the populace but the Houses of Parliament also regarded the most important member of the Government with dislike and distrust, the King began to change his attitude.

In 1667 Lord Southampton, the Chancellor's old and trusted colleague, died. Contrary to Clarendon's wish, the King put the office of Lord High Treasurer into commission and appointed William Coventry, the Chancellor's arch-enemy, one of the Board.¹ This disappointment irritated and annoyed the old man ; he became peevish, infirm and forgetful. Charles frequently neglected his advice and depended more and more on the counsel of others ; finally, importuned on all sides, the King determined to dispense with the services of his venerable minister. The Duke of York tried his best to induce the veteran to resign by telling him that it would be more conducive to his own dignity and the honour of the Crown for him to voluntarily take such a step without being forced to do so by Parliament ; but the well-meant efforts proved in vain, and the Chancellor remained obdurate.²

At last Albemarle, an old colleague, was sent with a request that he would relinquish the purse ; Secretary Morrice, following, demanded the seals. Charles in a letter to the Duke of Ormonde gives his reasons for these decisive steps :

" The truth is his behaviour and humour were growing so insupportable to myself and all the world else that it was impossible for me to live with it and to do those things with Parliament that must be done or the Government will be lost." ³

¹ Clarendon, " Life," Vol. III., p. 790.

² " James' Life," p. 429.

³ Ellis, Second Series, p. 39.

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As events proved, Parliament did not allow itself to be diverted from its purpose by this action of the King, severe and even harsh as it might appear to be. When the House met in October it immediately proceeded to impeach the ex-Chancellor; the sale of Dunkirk, the design of a standing army and the acquisition of wealth "greater than can be imagined to be lawfully got in such a time" being the chief accusations.¹ It is possible that a good answer might have been given to all these charges, some of which were trivial and absurd; but the embarrassment and even danger to the Crown of such a trial deeply impressed the King, and he brought all his influence to bear to induce Clarendon to quit the kingdom and so avoid the threatened proceedings.²

That Charles took this course primarily for his own benefit is undoubted. The disclosures of an impeachment would certainly have been, at the least, inconvenient and unpleasant; but he may have remembered the first public task which he, in his boyhood, performed, when as heir to the throne, the emissary of his father, he solicited, and solicited in vain from Parliament, mercy for that faithful servant Strafford, whose greatest sin was unswerving fidelity to his master; and the recollection may well have urged him to prevent even the possibility of another such calamity by inducing an equally devoted follower to evade, by flight, the risk which threatened him.³

Whatever reasons might have influenced Charles, his efforts succeeded; the old statesman, on hearing that he would be tried by a special court, crossed the Channel and, in November, took refuge at Rouen, where he had lived during his previous exile. On his departure the Commons passed an Act calling on him to surrender by the 1st February, and in default banishing him for life, making his pardon impossible without the consent of Parliament.⁴

Clarendon, on the news of this measure, attempted to

¹ "Parliamentary History," p. 377.

² Clarendon, "Life," Vol. III., p. 864.

³ David Lloyd, "New Eikon Basilike," p. 20.

⁴ "Parliamentary History," p. 400 Lord's Journals.

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return home, but broken in health by work and worry he fell ill. The Act came into force, and for the few years of life which remained to him he never returned to his native country.¹ He spent his time in writing that monumental work, "The History of the Great Rebellion," in which he recapitulated the principles of a Limited Monarchy and an Established Church, for both of which he strove so loyally ; but he also clearly demonstrated, in his elaborate book, how fundamentally he failed to grasp the vast change in the direction of liberty and toleration which had spread over the people of England, which failure of comprehension brought about not only his own downfall but the ruin of the dynasty he served so eminently.

On the flight of Clarendon the chief *onus* of government fell, for a while, on William Coventry and Bennett, the seals being given to Sir Orlando Bridgman, a venerable lawyer of great legal experience, the size of whose family, however, which "gathered like a snowball," caused him to prefer interest to principle and to avoid all measures which might be detrimental to the welfare of himself or his numerous surroundings or might bring upon him any unpleasant responsibility.²

Coventry, eloquent, well born and highly gifted, though successful in displacing Clarendon, yet failed to win the confidence of his master or his colleagues ; he could not compete with Arlington either in the management of business or intrigue. Charles, who called him "the Visionary," disliked him, mistrusted him and finally took the opportunity afforded by a quarrel and duel in which he engaged with Buckingham to dismiss him from his Councils.³

By that time five men, whose names have come down to posterity as the notorious "Cabal," engrossed the routine of government.

It is curious how the coincidence of the initial letter of the five names forming the word "Cabal"—Clifford,

¹ "James' Life," p. 432.

² North's "Examen," p. 39 ; "James' Life," p. 429.

³ Pepys, 4th March, 1669.

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Arlington, Buckingham, Ashley, and Lauderdale—should have given a peculiar signification to a term well known at the time but bearing a somewhat different meaning. Cabal, in Jacobean times, meant a secret committee. “Cabala, sine crinia sacra, Mysteries of State and Government, in Letters of Illustrious Persons and Great Agents in which Secrets of Empire and Publique Manage of Affairs are contained” is the title of a book published in 1654 containing letters on public affairs in the reign of James I.

Of those who formed this secret committee under Charles II., the Committee of Foreign Affairs being its official title, one only, Ashley Cooper, afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury, can be said to have possessed first-class talent, and he, not unjustly, has been described as the wickedest man of a wicked time.

Sir Thomas Clifford, the most honest as Lauderdale was the most capable of the quintet, exercised by his fire and energy considerable influence over the House of Commons, and, but for the fact that he became a sincere and convinced Roman Catholic—a bar to all political ascendancy in that intolerant age—would probably have been a useful and distinguished public servant. Industrious, eloquent and ambitious, being first introduced into political life by Arlington, he rapidly rose to preferment; among men to whom corruption was second nature he kept his hands clean and, according to his lights, served his king and his country honourably and well.¹

Those who describe Arlington as merely a methodical pimp do him an injustice. Mulgrave, who understood him, considered that in England most people believed him to be “a man of much less ability than he really was”; but Mulgrave dilutes this faint praise by the qualifying remark that he was rather a subtle courtier than an able statesman.²

Anthony Hamilton, who disliked Arlington, in “La vie de Grammont” scoffingly declares that by means “of great earnestness which passed for business and impene-

¹ Evelyn, Vol. II., p. 92.

² Buckingham Memoirs, p. 83.

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trable stupidity for secrecy he gave himself the character of a great politician, and, no one having the leisure to examine him, he was taken at his word and made Minister and Secretary of State upon the credit of his own importance.”¹

In reality he seems to have been a highly capable administrator with little imagination and no principle, who carried his subserviency to the will of his master to such an extent as to earn for himself the sobriquet of “the conduit pipe.” An air of formality which he gained during an embassy to Spain, “and the very pedantic carriage of a true penman,” which came naturally, together with a good command of foreign languages enabled Arlington to assist satisfactorily in the management of the relations of this country with continental Powers; his distinct aptitude for business rendered him of great value to his master, for acute and keen-sighted as Charles might be, his love of ease caused him to be most intolerant of dull routine.

Arlington and Buckingham coalesced to bring about the dismissal of Clarendon, and continued the alliance until Coventry also fell from his official position; then for the remainder of their lives they opposed each other with acrimony, and lost no opportunity of endeavouring the one to supplant the other in the good graces of their sovereign.²

A greater contrast could not be found than that presented by the grave formal Bennett and the wild versatile Buckingham, the latter, truly, being the very epitome of the age in which he lived, a mixture of brilliancy and bestiality, talent and trickery, intrigue and inanity. Gifted with his father's beauty of face and symmetry of figure, he thought himself handsomer than Nature made him; the owner of vast wealth, the possessor of talents far above the average, eaten up with ambition, enervated by debauchery, he cared for nothing except to bulk large in the public eye, and took incredible pains to achieve an object which he threw away as soon as gained. “He dined when other men supped

¹ Grammont, p. 141.

² “James' Life,” p. 433.

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and supped when other men dined,"¹ wrote Ruvigny concerning him, and the expression "Buckingham hours" became a synonym for excess, restrained by neither day nor night. At times a furious fool, at times a subtle plotter, nothing except his own whim bound him, and the powers of fascination he appears to have acquired enabled him to induce others to treat his follies with indulgence. From his evil example Burnet declares that the King, while in exile, learnt all his vices;² but to George Villiers Charles ever showed great forbearance—merciful forgiveness for acts which approached perilously near to treason, and even a degree of affection, tinged, however, with good-humoured contempt. But Charles never confided in him, and once scornfully remarked: "In great matters I treat Buckingham no better than a dog."³

It is a terrible satire on the complete want of moral fibre of the times that this frantic libertine, whose life was a continuous breach of the Ten Commandments, should have been regarded as the advocate and leader of that Puritan faction which preached rigidity of morals and practised, outwardly, austerity of life. At the time of the Civil War and the confiscation of great estates Parliament bestowed Buckingham's property on the Roundhead general Sir Thomas Fairfax. "There is a rumour," wrote Clarendon bitterly, "that Buckingham will marry Cromwell's daughter; he would marry Cromwell's groom to save his estates." He did save his estates, for he married Fairfax's daughter, a lean, brown little woman, gifted, however, with merit and virtues.⁴ He treated her abominably, as might be expected; he ran away with Lady Shrewsbury; then, when the husband of the latter objected, killed him in a duel, the peccant wife, dressed as a page, holding the horses; and yet this dissolute son-in-law of one of Oliver's generals, especially when, as occasionally happened, "he sought God in the Anabaptist manner," contrived to cast such glamour over

¹ Ranke, *n.*, Ruvigny's letter; Reresby, p. 171.

² Burnet, Vol. I., p. 69.

³ Mignet, Vol. III., p. 665; Clarendon, *State Papers*, p. 171.

⁴ Dunois, "Memoirs of the Court of England."

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the Sectaries and Fifth Monarchy men that they not only allowed him to pose as the true champion of Protestantism and the convinced foe of Popery but, on important occasions, followed him as their guide and leader.¹

Shaftesbury, immortalised in Dryden's poem, needs no record but his deeds. A Cavalier by birth and breeding, after fighting for the King during the early part of the Civil War, when the Royal cause waned, Ashley Cooper used his talents to ingratiate himself with the Protector and did so successfully, becoming a member of Cromwell's Council of State. On the death of Oliver, seeing no chance of preferment as a Republican, he formed one of the deputation to Breda to offer the crown to Charles Stuart. After the Restoration, in the capacity of Chancellor of the Exchequer, he signed the treaty with France; subsequently, in the higher office of Lord Chancellor, in eloquent language pleaded with Parliament for the complete destruction of the Dutch United Provinces. "Delenda est Carthago," he denounced. Disappointed in his hopes of greater political power, knowing that the keen-witted King saw through him, he deserted the Royal cause, became the leader of the Opposition, organised throughout the country resistance to the court and raised ten thousand "brisk boys" in London to create disorder and rioting when necessary; at last, detected in plotting, certainly for rebellion, probably for the murder of the King, he fled to Holland, the country whose destruction he formerly advocated, leaving his dupes behind to perish on a scaffold and his "brisk boys" to be shot down by the Royal guards whom he had attempted to suborn. Warped and diseased in body, unprincipled, highly intellectual but wholly selfish in mind, he justly earned the title of the wickedest man in the wickedest age.

"Of all the miscreants ever went to hell,
This villain rampant bears away the bell;"

wrote the gentle Andrew Marvell of John Maitland, Earl and

¹ North, "Examen," p. 453.

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Duke of Lauderdale. Certainly neither in appearance nor manner did Lauderdale possess attractive qualities. "A Saracen fiery face with his tongue too large for his mouth, which when he spoke bedewed those around him,"¹ red unkempt locks hanging on his shoulders and a gross hulking figure do not sound inviting; also, to judge from Pepys and Aylesbury's narratives, his habits were as disagreeable as his appearance.

Like so many men in that age, he contained a mass of contradictions. Coarse and brutal in appearance, rude and boisterous in manner, at a time moreover when good breeding and refinement were beginning to be valued, he owned considerable mental acquirements, spoke several languages, carried about with him a "little Hebrew Bible in octavo without points," which he frequently read, showed in many ways a genuine love of learning and enjoyed the society and friendship of intellectual and gifted people, such as Sir Robert Moray, the president of the then newly-established Royal Society.²

Of his capabilities also there can be no doubt. One of the "Engagers," as the reactionary Covenanters were called, he took a prominent part in inviting the young Charles Stuart to Scotland, and earnestly strove to neutralise the narrow and foolish intolerance of his co-religionists. After the Restoration his ability and method did much to counteract the ineptitude of Middleton and the "Drunken Administration." Subsequently, though guilty of great cruelty to the Cameronians and the moor folk, he practically ruled Scotland with prudence and success until James, Duke of York, supplanted him as Commissioner.

Though his career showed a series of inconsistencies, though the thoroughness of his coercive measures drew on him the anathema of such Puritans as Marvell, yet there was a downrightness about the man which contrasted favourably with the hypocrisy and dissimulation of those who opposed him. "They are damned insipid lies; if lyars

¹ Aylesbury Memoirs, p. 14.

² Lauderdale Papers.

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need lie why do not they colour them better," he retorted on his accusers, and the directness of his words was reflected in his actions. Even Clarendon, who hated him, acknowledged that he had "courage enough not to fail." His talents for administration were incontestable, and in him Charles possessed a vigorous and valuable servant.¹

Such were the ministers who rose on Clarendon's fall, but it must not be supposed that in any way their functions resembled those of a modern Government.

The collective responsibility of the Cabinet and ministers of to-day did not exist in any shape in the time of Charles II. ; the King called to his Councils whomsoever he wished, whether the honoured individual agreed in policy with the others among whom he found himself or whether he dissented, and the King dismissed his councillors at his own will and pleasure, generally, however, providing them with a pardon for all their acts done in the capacity of minister, thus assuming to himself the whole *onus* of responsibility. An example of this system can be found in the "Traité de Madame," signed on behalf of the King by Clifford and Arlington, but studiously kept secret from the other members of the Cabinet, who, in turn, were signatories of a second document, the so-called "Traité Simulé," in which important clauses were omitted—those relative to the establishment of the Roman Catholic faith in England.²

During the time of the Cabal Charles himself ruled England ; in all the important items of policy, whether foreign, religious or domestic, he stamped his individuality upon the measure and carried it, or attempted to carry it, according to his own will and discretion. His ministers advised and reported to him, but they did so separately, individually, and often secretly ; indeed, in this connection, Shaftesbury on one occasion expressed his astonishment that any statesman could be so mad as to give counsel of great importance "to a junto or number of men who

¹ Lauderdale Papers ; North, "Examen," p. 453.

² Mignet, p. 256.

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might divulge that which otherwise would be given in secret,"¹ and the responsibility for acting on which would rest on the monarch and the monarch alone.

When Charles, therefore, wrote to his sister Henriette, "One thing I desire you to take as much as possible out of the King of France's head, that my ministers are anything but what I will have them," he spoke the truth; and again, when he added, "Whatsoever opinion my ministers had been of I would and do always follow my own judgment, and if they take any other measure than that, they will see themselves mistaken in the end,"² he exactly stated the case, for, especially during the negotiations with France, he acted as his own Prime Minister.

To all who without prejudice study the work of this king, who view the adroitness and courage with which he escaped or overcame difficulties which frightened and dismayed his ministers, it is remarkable that for so long his character, talents and objects should have been misconstrued. The reason for this misconception lies in the fact that Charles's love of ease and delight in pleasure were so great that although personally he frequently conceived the design he rarely carried it to an end, but left the execution entirely to his subordinates, took no trouble to make himself acquainted with the details or progress of affairs, and then, when, as often happened, he found the matter complicated by the mismanagement or bad faith of those to whom he had left the arrangement, was forced to resume control and to act and speak in a manner apparently contrary to his deeds and words of a short time before. North, in his "Examen," lays great stress on this failing in the character of Charles II., and, if the fact is admitted, it renders many difficult and contradictory episodes of his life easier to understand. "The King keeps his own counsel so much as to make his ministers fear to serve him," wrote Reresby, and the remarks of the diarists and chroniclers of the times, their frequent announcement that "So and so and so and so

¹ Christie, "Shaftesbury," pp. 61, 62.

² "Madame," pp. 268, 269.

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rules all," that "Trea^s has infinitely eclipsed Arlⁿ with King," etc., bear testimony to the truth of the assertion.¹

Be it remembered also that Charles had no favourites (of the male sex it should be added); there is no record of any minister with whom he maintained confidential intercourse for long, and here lies the explanation of another fact which is always held to be greatly to the discredit of his reputation.

During the last fifteen years of his life he is supposed to have been entirely under the dominion, connubial as well as political, of the Duchess of Portsmouth. Louise de Kéroualle de Penancoët, the daughter of a noble French house of Lower Brittany, arrived in England late in the year 1670, when the Cabal held full sway.² Once before she visited this country, earlier in the same year, as maid of honour to Henriette, and her pretty baby face appealed strongly to the amorous King, tired of the tempestuous charms of that domineering virago, Lady Castlemaine.

When Henriette departed Charles asked her for a souvenir; she produced her jewel-case and told him to take a trinket.

"Leave me that," he smilingly replied, pointing to the pretty French girl.

To her honour Henriette firmly refused and bore the coveted beauty back to France. Later in the year, when difficulties arose concerning the execution of clauses of the treaty, and complications threatened to ensue concerning the second so-called *Traité Simulé*, of which alone the three Protestant ministers of Charles—Buckingham, Ashley, and Lauderdale—were cognisant, Louis and his adviser deemed it wise to establish, if possible, about the person of the English King some influence in which they could confide and through which they could secretly communicate with him.

Louis always received full particulars of all that went on in the English court; his ambassadors were instructed that no circumstance could be too trivial for the ready ear of their august master. "Write in full even if you have nothing

¹ North, "Examen," p. 451; Reresby, p. 221.

² Fourneron, "Louise de Kéroualle," p. 60.

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to say except that you have nothing to say," suggested de Lionne to Courtin, and the envoys one and all obeyed the injunction.¹

The episode at Dover of Charles's infatuation did not escape the notice of the astute Colbert de Croissy, and, as the alliance with England required stimulation, the fair young Bretonne received every encouragement from her own monarch to accept the offer of her royal admirer of the post of maid of honour to her Majesty the Queen of England. A royal yacht, specially sent for the purpose, bore the young lady across the Channel; by the end of the year she found herself firmly established at the English court and its King taking every opportunity of paying her attention.²

But, either from *finesse* or modesty, the "Weeping Willow," as saucy Nell Gwyn called her French rival, resisted the advances made to her, and it required the intervention and pressure of both the French ambassador and (disgraceful to relate) of Lord and Lady Arlington before she finally yielded herself to the embraces of her royal lover.

The Arlingtons invited Colbert and his fair *protégée* to Euston, their great house in Suffolk; Charles, being at Newmarket, frequently came over and passed several hours a day with the fascinating Louise, she "showing by her expressions of gratitude that she was not insensible to the kindness of a great King."³ As Evelyn relates, the guests in the house contrived some sort of a mock marriage ceremony, probably consisting of those gross and immodest customs which at that period attended such functions—something of the same sort, apparently, as Lake declares that Charles himself performed at the nuptials of William of Orange.⁴

Anyhow, from that date Louise de Kéroualle became the reigning favourite, and Louis of France obtained a means of secret communication, more reliable than he could command before, between himself and his Britannic brother.

¹ Jusserand, p. 43.

² Fourneron, p. 61.

³ Fourneron, "Colbert to de Lionne," p. 66.

⁴ Evelyn, Vol. II. p. 68.

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There can be no doubt that the Duchess of Portsmouth, (as she became early in 1673), filled a place in Charles's affections peculiar to herself. Halifax declares : " The last especially was quite out of the definition of an ordinary mistress. . . . Her chamber was the true Cabinet Council. . . . There was more real business done there in his (the King's) politic than in his personal capacity, and there was the French part of the Government, which was not the least." ¹

The chief duty of those who acted for Louis and the French policy consisted, at that time, in persuading Charles to allow the declaration of war against the Dutch to precede any attempt that might be made to establish Roman Catholicism. ²

No apprehension of difficulty on this head need have been entertained. Charles showed perfect readiness to postpone his religious enterprise ; he put on one side the solicitation of the Duke of York and devoted all his energies to the congenial task of organising and preparing the Navy. Both the French and English Governments made no secret of their desire for war and openly sought for a pretext for commencing hostilities ; but in this they found unexpected difficulties, for John de Witt, fully conscious that the first result of any warlike operation would be to strengthen the party of William of Orange, showed unwontedly pacific intentions. ³

Temple, the friend of Holland and all things Dutch, returned to England in the summer of 1671, and Downton, who represented this country at the Hague both in the time of Cromwell and after the Restoration, resumed his old post. A rough, domineering man, he earned so much unpopularity during his previous stay that, when at the Council Board the King announced his appointment as ambassador to Holland, one of those present exclaimed : " Why, the rabble will tear him to pieces ! " " Odd's fish," genially replied the King, " I will venture him." ⁴

¹ Halifax, Vol. II., p. 350.

² Mignet, Vol. III., p. 559.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. III., p. 697.

⁴ Temple, Vol. II., p. 180.

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When even Downton's bullying failed to produce the required provocation stronger measures were adopted, Sir Robert Holmes receiving orders to attack the home-coming Dutch fleet of traders from the Levant, an act of unprovoked aggression only to be excused by success, which it failed to attain.

The reasons for this attempt were, firstly, hopes of rich booty ; secondly " because," as Temple wrote to his brother, " neither the Dutch nor the French would believe we were in earnest until the attack on the Smyrna fleet."¹ Writers antagonistic to Charles and his policy lay too much stress on this alleged breach of international comity. Many acts of a warlike nature continued to be made during the peace by both English and Dutch subjects in distant places, especially in Surinam, where the petty warfare never ceased, and it is by no means clear that the formal declaration of war invariably preceded an overt act. That the Dutch expected something of the kind is evident, as subsequent events showed, for they had provided such a strong guard for the protection of the convoy that when Holmes, who, like all admirals of the time, showed great jealousy of his fellow commanders, instead of waiting to be reinforced by Spragge's squadron, then in view, attacked prematurely with inadequate force, he failed to capture more than three or four merchant vessels, being in fact repulsed with loss.²

The war thus inauspiciously begun continued in somewhat the same fashion. Owing to delay in fitting out the ships the Duke of York, who had resumed command, only just managed to effect a junction with the French squadron ; the Dutch fleet, by a very short space of time, failing to interpose, as they intended to do by their preconceived plan of campaign, between the allies.

Delayed by stress of weather the combined forces of French and English leisurely proceeded to Southwold Bay, where the ships again repaired and revictualled ; the necessity for repeating the operation so very soon after sailing being

¹ Temple, Vol. II., p. 180.

² " James' Life," p. 456.

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an eloquent testimony to the inefficiency of the Navy Commissioners.

Whilst lying at anchor in this condition De Ruyter, the greatest seaman of the age, contrived to steal unexpectedly upon them, and, but for the vigilance of a French officer, Captain Cogolin, might have found the fleets totally unprepared for attack.¹

The action which ensued brought no decisive result, both sides inflicting and sustaining considerable loss, the English contingent especially suffering heavily.² As usual in these desperate engagements, many officers of distinction fell, chief among them being Edward Montagu, Earl of Sandwich, the friend and patron of Pepys, a brave but unfortunate commander, to whom, next to Monck, the King owed his restoration to the throne of his fathers.

Charles, as a mark of gratitude—in this case sincere—gave to the deceased nobleman a magnificent public funeral, the only recognition then possible of his invaluable and loyal services.³

So severely did the fleet suffer in the battle that the admirals deemed it advisable to return to the Nore for repairs. Charles at once took the opportunity—to him always a pleasure—of visiting the ships, on this occasion accompanied by certain members of his Cabinet, among whom were Shaftesbury and Clifford, the three holding an important consultation with James and his flag officers as to the future operations of the fleet.

The hopes of both the King and his ministers rested upon a design to intercept the Dutch East India convoy, which, according to intelligence received, might shortly be expected round the north of Scotland on its homeward way.⁴

In this war, as in almost every political act of his reign, Charles found himself fettered and restricted by financial straits. Arlington advised the attack on the Smyrna Fleet solely in the hopes of taking booty sufficiently rich to pay

¹ "James' Life," pp. 461 *et passim*.

² *Ibid.*, p. 475.

³ Hatton, p. 89.

⁴ "James' Life," p. 478.

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for the fitting out of the ships, and now questions of finance again influenced naval movements which rightly should only have been controlled by the exigencies of strategy and tactics.

James and his flag officers strongly advised pressing the Dutch back, blockading their coasts and harbours and awaiting the arrival of the East India merchantmen in their home waters, where probably the allies would gain an easy prey ; but the " reasons of the Duke and his sea officers were overruled by the King and the Cabinet Council," who decided that the pursuit of the convoy should precede all other movements. Excessive bad weather prevented the success of the plan ; the enemy's vessels got safely to port, and again the depleted treasury of Charles failed to profit by the desired prizes.¹

From the commencement of the war funds were sorely needed.

Parliament met in October, 1670, when the Lord-Keeper Bridgman informed the Commons that " the ordinary charge of the fleet, *communibus annis*, came to about £500,000 and could not be supported for less, and the setting out of the fleet by extraordinary means could not be less than £800,000." ² This sum the Commons granted by way of supply, and on reassembling in January, 1671, after drawing up a remarkable petition against Popery, upon the issuing of a proclamation in accordance with their prayer, " proceeded with vigour upon the King's supplies, the Subsidy Bill and the Excise Bill."

But if any hopes were excited in the mind of Charles that a sincere attempt would be made to deal practically with the financial situation they were doomed to disappointment ; a bitter controversy arose between the Lords and the Lower House concerning the right of the Lords to amend a Bill dealing with the rates imposed on foreign merchandise, the Lords maintaining " that the power to effect these changes is a fundamental, inherent and undoubted right of the House of Peers from which they cannot depart " and

¹ " James' Life," p. 479.

² " Parliamentary History," p. 458.

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the Commons resolving, in almost the same words, that to them and them alone belonged the prerogative of imposing or levying any tax or duties on commodities whether native or imported.¹

The Houses held three conferences without definite result, the heat of the controversy steadily rising all the time, and a prorogation alone separated the combatants.²

Events of recent date render this dispute interesting; some thinkers of to-day may even hold the opinion that the summary method adopted by Charles to bring both Houses to reason might, with advantage to the nation, again be put into operation.

Although the Commons on this occasion displayed a desire to supply funds in a degree commensurate to the debts already incurred and to disbursements necessary for the defence of the kingdom, yet in reality the sum voted was totally inadequate to relieve the liabilities which lay heavy on the shoulders of the Government. In addition to the maintenance and outfitting of the fleet and of the various charges for the administration of the country, there existed debts of two millions sterling already incurred; moreover, the Exchequer always had to recognise the fact that not only did all the subsidies when collected fall far short of the amount voted, but also that the collection extended over such a space of time as to be practically useless for the purpose originally intended.

The royal aid granted in 1664—65 as a fund for the first Dutch war, estimated to produce £2,500,000, more or less, not only showed a deficiency of some £84,000, but, although the collection commenced in April, 1665, arrears straggled in until July, 1670. In like fashion the tax in 1666, estimated to produce £1,200,000, only yielded a total of £1,085,000, or a shrinkage of £115,000, and, although the payments began in May, 1668, arrears continued to be collected in September, 1670.³

¹ "Parliamentary History," pp. 480 *et passim*.

² *Ibid.*, p. 496.

³ Shaw, "Beginning of the National Debt," p. 399.

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Embarrassed in every way by the poverty of the Exchequer, the extravagance of some portion of the expenditure and the bad management of the whole financial situation, Charles eagerly anticipated the first instalment of the subsidy promised by the French king. In February, 1672, a third treaty between France and England came into existence, in all material points an exact facsimile of the *Traité Simulé*, but with the difference that it contained the nomination of the Duke of Monmouth, in lieu of the Duke of Buckingham, as commander of the English military contingent of 6,000 men, and bore the date 5th February, probably for the purpose of deluding Parliament into the belief that the negotiations were of recent occurrence, and to hide the fact that the original treaty was two years old.¹

The first portion of the French subsidy in due course found its way into Charles's coffers, but even this welcome reinforcement proved totally inadequate for the needs of such a fleet as the exigencies of a war with Holland demanded.

Under these circumstances the King and his ministers took a step which has incurred the sternest reprobation from all historians in the past and some in the present—"the stop of the Exchequer."

It is quite remarkable how completely this action of Charles and his Government has been misrepresented. Oldmixon, a violent party writer of moderate ability, as the *Edinburgh Review* calls him, who produced his work about the year 1730, declares: "The sum stopped by this declaration was £1,400,000; the restraint was never taken off and the creditors were defrauded of every farthing."² Bishop Kennet, who compiled a record of historical statements about the same time, thus describes the operation: "The expedient was to shut up the Exchequer wherein the bankers who had furnished the King with mighty sums of money at very extorsive interest had lodged between 13 and 14 hundred thousand pounds of other subjects'

¹ Mignet, Vol. III., p. 700; Dalrymple, Vol. I., p. 129.

² Oldmixon, p. 563.

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money.”¹ The allegation made is direct; the bankers lodged large sums of money in the Exchequer and the King seized their property. Such an attack by Hanoverian writers on a Stuart king might pass, at the time, as justifiable, but modern historians have endorsed the charge, Dr. Airey succinctly stating that “Charles laid violent hands on a sum of £1,400,000.”²

The real facts are as follows. Owing to the great difficulty constantly experienced in collecting supplies, the Government, in order to carry on the business of the State, applied to the bankers to advance money on the security of the taxes. “As soon as Parliament had voted the King certain sums of money out of particular taxes, the bankers advanced at once the money voted by Parliament and were repaid by weekly drafts on the Exchequer as the taxes were received.” For this accommodation the bankers charged no less than 12 per cent., while the rate of interest they paid to the clients from whom they borrowed money only amounted to 5 per cent.; thus for every £100 lent to the Government the “goldsmiths,” as they were called, took £112 out of the Exchequer and helped themselves both to capital and proportionate interest so soon as the money could be squeezed out of the taxpayers.

No wonder under such a system the Exchequer always remained empty and money for current expenses could never be found.

Just before the commencement of the war, when the lack of funds became more and more desperate and the bankers had advanced £1,328,526,³ Charles, on the advice of either Clifford or Shaftesbury, gave orders that no further payments should be made from the Exchequer and that the supply, as it slowly dribbled in, should be retained for the purpose of carrying on the national government. At first the order ordained that none of the money should be released, but that one year's interest should be added to the capital;

¹ Kennet, Vol. II., p. 284.

² Airey, “Charles II.,” p. 269.

³ Macpherson, “Annals of Commerce.”

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four days later, owing to the great commercial disturbance caused by this proclamation, a fresh pronouncement declared that interest at 6 per cent. per annum should be paid to those to whom it was due and that the suspension of repayment of capital should only be for twelve months.¹

That this arrangement was ill-advised, arbitrary and short-sighted goes without saying, but to stigmatise it as violent robbery shows a complete misapprehension of the circumstances. The bankers lent money by loan, secured on certain portions of the revenue assigned for the purpose ; instead of being repaid at stated periods they were permitted to take both capital and interest out of the Exchequer as the money came in, and frequently they lent it again to the Government at the same exorbitant interest.

The country cried out at this domination of the goldsmiths ; not only was it alleged that they were obstructive to the nation, getting all the ready money into their hands, but that they also bought up the King's assignments at " 20 or 30 per cent. profit," so that the King was at a fifth part loss in all the issue of his whole revenue." Their rapacity exceeded all bounds. " No one expects that any-one will make them honest except a catchpole," declares an old tract of the times ; and Pepys complains that drafts on the Exchequer could only be cashed at the goldsmiths' shops, where the unhappy holders, perforce, paid 15 or 20 per cent. for the privilege of receiving payment of their debts in cash, which, as Pepys feelingly observes, " is a most horrid shame and that which must not be suffered." ²

Such a vicious system demanded reform ; in other countries equitable measures of finance existed, and apparently there was no reason why similar conditions should not have prevailed in this country.³ It is evident that, theoretically, Charles and his advisers contemplated funding the National Debt, paying reasonable interest upon it and redeeming it by instalments ; but the ignorance or incapacity of those who

¹ " James' Life," p. 455.

² Pepys, 19th January, 1663.

³ Clarendon, " Life," Vol. III., p. 601.

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endeavoured to put this scheme into operation prevented proper steps being taken to minimise the grave disturbance to trade and business which inevitably ensued, and the lack of these precautions produced widespread loss and distress among innocent and inoffensive people. The interest on the loans might well and justifiably have been reduced. Temple asserts that the King could get all the money he wanted at 6 per cent. ; and that English bankers borrowed large sums from Dutch merchants, who, obtaining only $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 per cent. at home, were quite ready to lend abroad at a higher rate, even to their enemies.¹ But the secret and sudden action which ministers adopted, together with the financial destitution of the country, precipitated a state of national bankruptcy, and although, in reality, such a condition was the inevitable result of inordinate expenditure spreading over many years before the Restoration, yet Charles's advisers, by their blundering violence, fixed on themselves and their master the blame for a catastrophe for which, in justice, they should only be held partially responsible.

The initiation of the project is attributed to both Clifford and Ashley. Although the evidence, adduced by Mr. Christie, appears to acquit the latter of being the originator of the scheme, yet Aylesbury, who lived in close communication with Charles, tells us that on one occasion when Lord Shaftesbury (as Ashley had then become) reproached the King for the stop of the Exchequer, Charles, with natural warmth, turned sharply upon him and cried : " I wonder at your impudence ! You know that you were the one who first gave me that advice in cabinet." Oldmixon tells a story that, the King having promised the treasurership to anyone who would provide a million and a half without having recourse to Parliament, Ashley informed Clifford that he knew of a way, but that it would be too dangerous, whereupon Clifford " plied my lord with visits and having drank him to a pitch " got out of him the secret. Clifford thereupon obtained the treasurership ; Ashley, angry,

¹ Temple, Vol. II., p. 34.

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could only reply: "Clifford has ploughed with my heifer."¹

Whoever may be the individual who conceived the idea Parliament is equally to blame for many of the results which accrued. Within a twelvemonth of the "stop," the King, in accordance with his promise that the suspension of payment should only be for one year, made application to the Commons for a supply which might be applied to refunding their loan to the bankers. "The King makes the bankers believe that he will keep his word with them and that the Exchequer shall be opened at Christmas, which I pray God he may be able to do," writes Hatton; and the Chancellor, Shaftesbury, clearly and distinctly stated the whole case, explaining the hardships which the proceedings brought upon the goldsmiths and those who lent money to them, "but neither the bankers nor they have reason to complain, if you take them into your care and they have paid to them what was due to them when the stop was made with 6 per cent. interest from that time. The King is very much concerned both in honour and interest to see this done."²

This appeal received no attention whatever from the Commons; after some delay they passed a supply of £200,000 for the fleet, but made no attempt to deal with the question of the debt. Again, in the session of October the King himself, in the Speech from the Throne, committed to their care and consideration "the debt I owe the goldsmiths, in which many others of my good subjects are involved. I heartily recommend their condition to you and desire your assistance for their relief."³

Once more the House of Commons turned an absolutely deaf ear to the appeal, concerning itself only with matters relating to its Speaker and the proposed second marriage of the Duke of York, refusing altogether to take financial matters into consideration, for, as one member observed,

¹ Aylesbury Memoirs, p. 20; Oldmixon, p. 564.

² "Parliamentary History," p. 506; Hatton, p. 99.

³ "Parliamentary History," p. 586; Journals of the House of Commons; Journals of the House of Lords.

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“in the King’s Speech there is money in the first place and money in the last” ; logically, therefore, it would be wise to avoid dealing with the subject.¹

From 1674 to 1683 Charles continued to pay the 6 per cent. interest, then, despairing of inducing Parliament to deal with the matter, he granted to the unhappy goldsmiths a yearly charge upon the excise, a branch of his own Crown revenue. Both the interest and the effect of this rent-charge ceased at the Revolution ; a dispassionate investigation will therefore show that William of Orange treated the unfortunate financiers with as much harshness and injustice as they suffered from Charles Stuart.²

On the 15th March, two days before the declaration of war, Charles issued another document, the celebrated Declaration of Indulgence, a suspension of all the penal laws in matters ecclesiastical against Nonconformists and recusants. “It being evident by the sad experience of twelve years that there is very little fruit of all these forcible courses, we think ourselves obliged to make use of that supreme power in ecclesiastical matters which is not only inherent in us but hath been declared and recognised to be so by several statutes and Acts of Parliament.”³

It is possible, even probable, that Charles hoped that this Act of Indulgence to recusants of all sects might induce Louis to believe that an initiatory step was being taken towards carrying out the religious clauses of the *Traité de Madame*, and thus would have the effect of loosing his purse-strings ; but it must also be remembered that once before, in 1682, he attempted to extend the same merciful enactment, when no thought of alliance with France existed in his mind.

That he desired toleration of all religious creeds is obvious ; he had every reason to do so. He owed his life to the Roman Catholics, his throne to the Presbyterians. If the members of the Catholic faith had not, at terrible risk

¹ “Parliamentary History,” p. 592.

² “Parliamentary History,” pp. 5, 91 (Reign of William and Mary). Macpherson, “Annals of Commerce.”

³ “Parliamentary History,” Appendix.

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to themselves, harboured and helped him in his flight from Worcester, he would, undoubtedly, have fallen into Oliver Cromwell's hands, who having slain the father would hardly have spared the son ; while the action of the Presbyterians, after the effacement of the faint-hearted Richard Cromwell, equally undoubtedly largely contributed to the successful issue of Monck's effort for the Restoration.

Even adverse critics are constrained to allow that the effects of the declaration were beneficial in a high degree. "Ministers returned after years of banishment to their homes and their flocks, chapels were reopened, gaols were emptied, hundreds of Quakers were set free to worship God after their own fashion."¹ Incidentally it may be mentioned that John Bunyan was numbered among those released and so gained an opportunity of giving to the world that terror of childhood "The Pilgrim's Progress."

During the previous war communications which passed between malcontents at home and the large number of exiles, chiefly old officers of Cromwell's army, men completely disaffected towards monarchy, constituted a distinct danger to the country. By a complete toleration Charles hoped to induce some of these men to return home and act as peaceful if not loyal subjects. The necessity of "peace at home while there was war abroad" appealed to all who rightly viewed the political situation ; but nevertheless the Declaration possessed two vital faults in the eyes of Parliament which provoked unrelenting and persistent opposition—it came into force by the exercise of the royal prerogative alone, and it favoured, though only in a minor degree, those who professed Roman Catholicism.

All the members of the Cabinet, although perhaps from different motives, supported this attempt at toleration ; but the House of Commons resolutely set its face against any infringement of the Act of Uniformity, and the attempt to exercise the royal dispensing power excited the bitterest dissatisfaction.² Yet in justice to Charles it must be con-

¹ Green, "History."

² "Parliamentary History," pp. 515 *et passim*.

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ceded that the extent of the prerogative of mercy never had been defined. The royal power of pardoning delinquents, of respiting death sentences, even of stopping prosecutions in his own courts of justice, was unquestioned, yet it might be contended that such interference could not be extended to the abrogation of a whole Act of Parliament ; although as a fact, at this very time, the King by his royal power did suspend the Navigation Act and the nation gratefully received the benefit to the commerce of the country resulting therefrom.¹

The real reason which caused the opposition to this deed of Charles to be so very pronounced was hatred of Roman Catholicism. Baxter said that the Nonconformists received the boon with mixed feelings because it extended also to the abhorred Papist ; they wanted "a toleration of all that are tolerable," which meant themselves alone ; others expressed the same thought even more drastically, their objection being to a "cursed intolerable toleration." Yet the King, in clear precise language, stated his "express resolution, meaning and intention to be that the Church of England be preserved and remain entire in its doctrine, discipline and government as it now stands established by law," that Protestant nonconformists should be permitted to worship in places licensed for the purpose, but the Popish recusant should only be permitted to practise his religion in the privacy of his own house.²

When doubts and remonstrances arose, again the King emphatically repeated : "If any Bill be offered which shall secure peace to the Church and the kingdom . . . I will concur in all ways which shall appear good for the kingdom." But these assurances fell on deaf ears ; the House of Commons chose to believe, or professed to believe, that toleration of dissenters meant a blow to the Church. "If this toleration means anything, the Church of England means nothing," said one member. Then step by step the House began to revert to its favourite practice of persecution, and openly

¹ Hume, Vol. VII., p. 465.

² Baxter, "Life" ; "Parliamentary History," p. 503.

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declared that Romanists must be excluded from all favourable consideration.¹

Charles made a strong effort to obtain his own way. In manly, straightforward language he placed his reasons before the members on opening the session of 1673, and he wound up with the emphatic pronouncement: "I shall take it very ill to receive contradiction in what I have done, and I will deal plainly with you, I am resolved to stick to my declaration."

The Commons remained obdurate. On the advice of Shaftesbury the King appealed to the Lords, but even in the Upper House received but small assurance of support. The ministers held divided opinions, the Duke of Ormonde and also Arlington counselling surrender, the Duke of York and Clifford urging force or a dissolution of Parliament.²

Colbert, according to custom, kept Louis well advised concerning the proceedings of the English court. The plans of France depended on the active co-operation of England; for that co-operation to be effective Parliament must furnish funds, so Louis threw his influence into the scale and privately expressed a strong desire for the withdrawal of the Declaration.

Perhaps Father D'Orleans may be right when he says "it has been suspected that the women engaged in the affair,"³ for it is highly probable that Louis communicated with the Duchess of Portsmouth and advanced his views through her persuasive medium. Anyhow, peaceful counsels at last prevailed, and on the 2nd March Charles cancelled the Declaration, the announcement causing widespread satisfaction both among the people and in Parliament.⁴

The failure of his hopes inflicted a blow on the King; to his advisers it did more, it destroyed the Cabal. On the first introduction of the Declaration of Indulgence and the

¹ "Parliamentary History," pp. 526 *et passim*.

² Burnet, Vol. I., p. 230.

³ Père d'Orleans, "Revolutions under the Stuarts."

⁴ "Parliamentary History," p. 561; Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 156.

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proclamation of the stop of the Exchequer, the King conferred honours with a lavish hand on his ministers, Clifford and Ashley being raised to the peerage, Arlington and Lauderdale being created an earl and a duke respectively. But the political difficulties which these acts engendered proved too hard for the resolution of the old Lord-Keeper Bridgman. "Wee have lately had a very great removal of an eminent person y^e Lord-Keeper. . . . Y^e King told him y^t in consideration of his great indisposition of body he thought fit to free him from y^t troublesome employment but in consideration of his faithful service he would settle upon him a pension of £2,000 per annum w^{ch} should be well payd him."

Burnet declares that Bridgman lacked courage to affix the great seal to the Declaration of Indulgence and consequently the King dismissed him, but Hatton in the continuation of the above quoted letter gives a different reason for the retirement. He reports that Blackwell the banker, being sued by his creditors, "moved y^e late Lord-Keeper upon pretence y^t he had lent all y^e money to y^e King whose Exchequer was now shut up, to grant him an injunction to stop y^e proceeding of all his creditors and for denying this it is generally reported y^e seales were taken away. But this is but guess and y^t by y^e most ignorant." ¹ Yet the old man retired from his office, which forthwith Charles conferred on Ashley, creating him Earl of Shaftesbury and Lord High Chancellor, though even Shaftesbury, with all his unscrupulous adroitness, could not contrive to enjoy this distinguished position long.

The days of the Cabal were numbered.

For months past the Duke of York had abstained from attending the services of the English Church; the world began to declare that he must be a papist. The duchess on her deathbed, some two years earlier, openly confessed her conversion to the Roman faith, and the knowledge that a daughter of Clarendon, the pillar of the English Church,

¹ Hatton Correspondence, Vol. I., p. 102.

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should have seceded from that communion not only shocked the susceptibilities but awoke the suspicions of many, who thereupon believed that her husband's influence had much to do with his wife's change of religion. The suspicion now became stronger, and many members of both Houses of Parliament while willing to permit a limited degree of toleration yet considered that a danger to the State would arise if those who served in any public office or exercised any administrative function did not hold the tenets of the Established Church.¹

Sir William Coventry, anxious to strengthen the Protestant feeling in the country, introduced a Bill for "Ease to Protestant Dissenters"; but such a measure in no way satisfied the more strenuous spirits in Parliament, who, encouraged by what they conceived to be an awakening of national opinion, earnestly strove to pass legislation to prevent the growth of popery. This endeavour soon assumed the form of a Bill, that no persons could hold civil, military, or courtly office unless they took the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, received the sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England, and subscribed a declaration against transubstantiation.

If such a Bill became law both the Duke of York and the Treasurer Clifford would probably be obliged to relinquish their offices; consequently not only James and the Treasurer, but Buckingham, Lauderdale, and all the King's friends strenuously opposed it, Clifford especially making a most vehement speech against the measure.²

By some contemporary historians it is related that this speech of Clifford's was delivered in favour of the Declaration of Indulgence, not in opposition to the Test Act. The story as told by Burnet, Echard and others relates that when the debate began in the House of Lords the Treasurer, with native intolerance, advocated the measure with such heat as to defeat his own object. To the surprise of all and to the anger of the King, who attended the proceedings, Shaftes-

¹ "Parliamentary History," p. 535.

² Burnet, Vol. I., p. 230.

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bury, the Chancellor, threw the whole weight of his eloquence and authority against the declaration and by his efforts prevented the measure receiving larger support. James, on hearing the force of Shaftesbury's arguments, in deep resentment turned to his brother and said : " What a rogue you have for a Chancellor ! " Whereupon Charles contemptuously replied : " And what a fool you have for a Treasurer ! " ¹ Whatever version of the proceedings may be true, it is quite evident that Shaftesbury began to modify his attitude and to endeavour to stand well with those in Parliament who withstood the wishes of the court. The reasons for his sudden change of front have been variously stated, among others that Arlington, jealous of Clifford's elevation to the post of Treasurer, confided to the Chancellor the facts concerning the secret *Traité de Madame*, and thereupon Shaftesbury, piqued at being duped and kept in ignorance of an important item of policy and foreseeing that Parliament would shortly attack ministers rapidly losing their popularity, gladly availed himself, as was his wont, of an opportunity of putting himself right with public opinion.²

This version is corroborated by the fact that Colbert in a despatch to Louis on the 20th November, 1673, distinctly states that Arlington strove to save his fortune by complete subservience to the wishes of Parliament, and adds that St. Evremond also gave the information that this same minister worked with the Chancellor, Shaftesbury, in favour of the new oath, knowing well that Lord Clifford could not take it.³

A letter to Sir Joseph Williamson from the King's librarian, Rosse, written on the 21st June, 1673, at Whitehall, seems also to testify in the same direction, for it states that Lord Arlington, " who has the advantage of sticking close to the Act," is the person to whom Lord Clifford, then divested of the treasurership, " owes his being what he is." ⁴

¹ Ralph, ' History.'

² Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 236.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Williamson, Letters, Vol. I., p. 58.

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The Test Act passed both the Lords and Commons and became law on the 29th March ; with its passage practically began the long contest in which Charles single-handed, without the constant assistance or co-operation of any minister in whom he could trust or confide, fought both Houses of Parliament, session after session, on behalf of his brother and the legitimate succession to the throne, and ultimately emerged victorious from the contest.

Those who judge Charles only by the immoral episodes of his private life may well direct their attention to the qualities, both mental and physical, which he displayed during the continued struggle between himself and Parliament concerning the succession of his brother James. His ability, his adroitness, his courage and tenacity are admirably summed up in Walpole's epigram : " Nothing could keep down his parts but his character, nothing sustain his character but his parts."

The introduction of the Test Act produced an important change in the conduct of the Dutch war. James, as was hoped and expected, refused to take the oath, relinquished his command as Lord High Admiral, and ceased to direct naval operations, Rupert being appointed in his place.¹ No good results accrued from this supersession : James, with all his faults, had proved an able administrator, while Rupert owned few of the qualities needed for a commander-in-chief, especially at this juncture. He had the reputation of being " unlucky," was tactless and quarrelsome, bitterly disliked by the French, with whom he needs must co-operate, and took so strong a share in party politics that he obtained the name of the Earl of Shaftesbury's footman.

An engagement occurred on the 28th May, when the allied squadrons met the redoubtable de Ruyter with such indecisive results that, as Savile remarked, " We have lost nobody worth hanging." On the 4th June and again on the 11th August the fleets met and fought, the first action being of an entirely inconclusive character ; but the second

¹ " James' Life," p. 483.

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battle afforded the English admiral the opportunity he desired of a decisive combat.

The fight, beginning at 9 in the morning, continued till nightfall. Want of combination between the English commander, Rupert, and his second in command, Spragge, coupled with much dilatoriness on the part of the French admiral, D'Estrées, who stood aside at the critical moment, prevented Rupert achieving the desired victory. "I must have routed them, 'twas the greatest and plainest opportunity ever lost at sea," he bitterly remarked. The advantage of the campaign really remained with the Dutch, for de Ruyter by his skill prevented the main object of the allies, the landing of military forces on the Dutch coast, and the season being so far advanced further operations that year became impossible.¹

It is quite conceivable that Louis gave orders to spare his own fleet. To allow his most powerful maritime rivals to cripple each other while his own forces remained dispassionate onlookers, was a proceeding quite in consonance with his usual policy. But the British people were in no humour to act as catspaws for their French colleagues, and the relations between the two portions of the fleet became daily more strained. At last "the seamen are grown to such a pass that as a French ship comes by one of ours the captain cannot make six men in our ship give her a cheare as is usual from all the crewe"; in fact the unpopularity of the war could not be hidden, "the whole nation being prepossessed against the alliance."²

At this moment Spain seized the opportunity of acting as an intermediary and intimated that the Dutch would be willing to make favourable proposals. To these overtures Charles lent a willing ear: the Spanish trade brought in the greatest profit of any of the commercial undertakings of the country, and he meant to run no risk of losing it; besides, the aspect of the war had materially changed, for by the murder of the De Witts and the defeat of the Louve-

¹ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 233; Williamson, Letters, Vol. I., p. 189.

² Essex Papers, p. 121.

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stein faction the House of Orange resumed its ascendancy in the United Provinces. Charles in no way desired to fight against his nephew, so he readily availed himself of the offer, being assured of the approval of Parliament.

Sir William Temple hurried off to Holland, and on the 9th February, 1674, signed a treaty of peace by which England obtained a war indemnity of two million florins, the right of the flag, and the continued possession of New York, the foundation of her great colonial empire.¹

The Dutch war from a national point of view proved indecisive, but yet it ensured the complete discomfiture of the Cabal. Signs of disintegration in the Cabinet showed themselves before ; but immediately after the passing of the Test Act, Clifford, the Treasurer, an honest though violent man, refused the oath, acknowledged himself a Roman Catholic, and, thus incapacitated from office, resigned the White Staff on the 19th June, 1673, retiring to his Devonshire home at Ugbrook.

In a few months he died—by his own hand some said, by a terrible attack of stone others reported. Evelyn, who knew and liked him, described him as a man of melancholy temperament, that the loss of his office grieved him to the heart and at last broke it, and then proceeds to give a detailed relation of how the regrettable deed occurred ; but a different story appears in some letters of Sir Joseph Williamson, and the fate of the unhappy statesman is still somewhat of a mystery.²

On the very day Clifford gave up the staff of Treasurer, Charles, to the bitter disappointment of Arlington, appointed a Yorkshire baronet, Sir Thomas Osborne, to the place. Both the Duke of York and Clifford recommended Osborne, a prominent and talented member of the old Cavalier party, the only alternatives being Arlington, Sir William Coventry, or Lord Halifax ; but Charles, a good judge of character, disliked Coventry, an opinionated self-willed man, while the attitude of Halifax on the Declaration of Indulgence

¹ Temple, Vol. II., p. 248 ; "James' Life," p. 489.

² Evelyn, p. 93 ; Williamson, Letters, Vol. II., p. 50

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in no way conduced to raise him in the estimation of the King.

Osborne, almost immediately created Viscount Latymer, in a few months' time received the title of Earl of Danby, the name by which he is best known. With regard to his appointment as Treasurer, Reresby tells a strange story that the Duke of Buckingham acted as chief instrument in bringing it about by a bargain between Clifford, the old, and Osborne, the new Treasurer, "that Sir Thomas should officiate and give him (Clifford) half the salary." As many of the offices were bought and sold, this transaction may really have taken place.¹

A few months after Danby's promotion the King sent Henry Coventry, one of the secretaries of state, to demand the great seal from the Chancellor, Shaftesbury. Although sudden, the dismissal could not have been unexpected. Charles always mistrusted "Little Sincerity," as he satirically called the scheming Chancellor, and after the *volte-face* which Shaftesbury executed in the debate on the Test Act the choice between resignation and dismissal alone remained to him. "I but take off my gown to buckle on my sword," the disgraced statesman observed, and forthwith, with characteristic energy, set himself about the task of organising a party in opposition to the court.²

The dismissal of Shaftesbury, while producing effects wide-reaching and important on the policy of this country, also created a situation not without interest to the politicians of to-day, for from the work to which the ex-Chancellor set himself emerged our present party system.

Gifted with great ability, troubled with no scruples and absolutely destitute of principle, Shaftesbury possessed every quality suitable for the organiser of a party whose sole object was to obstruct and attack. His talents anticipated the whole paraphernalia of modern party warfare—the clubs, the pamphlets, the broad-sheets, everything

¹ Williamson, Letters, Vol. I., p. 51; Reresby, p. 175.

² Christie, "Shaftesbury," Vol. II., p. 157; Burnet, Vol. I., p. 241; "James' Life," p. 488.

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requisite for a full-blooded political organisation, not forgetting the physical force section, his "Brisk Boys," a band of gladiators as efficient and relentless as the "Molly Maguires," and with an equally alliterative, though somewhat less cryptic, appellation.

Charles, on the recommendation of Danby and the Speaker, Seymour, bestowed the seals on Heneage Finch, but only conferred the title of Lord-Keeper; he possibly may have doubted the capabilities of the new minister to face the storm so evidently arising, for the tittle-tattle of the court said of the appointment: "King altered six times in six hours about it."¹

Another change in the *personnel* of Charles's surroundings occurred in January, 1674, Colbert de Croissy, the adroit representative of Louis, returning to France, for his diplomatic acumen taught him that in the existing state of popular opinion Count Ruvigny, a Protestant and relative of many British families of repute, would further their master's influence more efficiently.

Truly both Parliament and people seethed with doubt and anxiety, the religious feelings of the country being deeply disturbed.² As before, James, Duke of York, caused the commotion. In September, 1673, he married, as his second wife, Princess Maria d'Este of Modena, a child of fifteen years of age just about to enter a convent, and of such narrow education, "so innocently bred," that she had never heard of such a place as England or such a person as her proposed husband.

James at first desired an alliance with the beautiful Duchess of Innspruck, but the empress died, and the emperor immediately consoled himself with his lovely neighbour, so James, perforce, looked elsewhere. Mary of Modena owned some advantages—she was good-looking and tall, with handsome eyes, regular features, and a clear complexion, but sadly lacking in grace and dignity; "having been bred in a monastery, she knew not how to set one foot before another."

¹ Essex Papers, p. 140.

² Dalrymple, p. 137; Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 239.

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Poor child ! she met with a bitter reception in this country : even before she landed Parliament hurled resolutions, and the people took a violent and quite unreasonable dislike to her, declared she had red hair, was only thirteen years old and hump-backed ; and, worse still, was the eldest daughter of the Pope. The rumour arose that she would reach London on the 5th November, the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot ; “ should she arrive to-night she would certainly be martyred,” declared an eye-witness. Fortunately she did not reach this country until the 21st November, and so escaped the threatened doom.

Charles treated his brother's bride with great kindness and attention, leading her himself into the presence chamber, where the Queen received her warmly ; but when the Duke of York conducted the old Duchess of Modena, his mother-in-law, also into the presence, and the King called for a chair so that she might be seated, the ladies in attendance, to the number of twenty-one, “ that were of the nobility,” inflamed by true British pride, ran out of the room, “ as thinking themselves of equal quality to a Duchess of Modena.”¹

Among the bulk of the people the same dissatisfaction with the marriage existed, for the two reasons that the bride was a papist and that the match was made by the French.

By this time the hatred of France so strongly increased that ministers became alarmed and strove to allay by every possible means the suspicions and rumours which permeated the country. Warlike operations remained in abeyance ; but when Parliament met in January, although prospects of the much-desired peace might be discerned (it came to pass in February), yet no concrete proposals could then be laid before the Houses, and the forebodings of coming trouble filled the Cabinet. The King in his Speech from the Throne informed the Commons that he would “ take them into his confidence. I know you have heard much of my alliance with France, and I believe it has been very strongly misrepresented to you as if there were certain secret articles

¹ Essex Papers, p. 145 ; Williamson, Vol. II., p. 63.

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of dangerous consequence, but I will make no difficulty of letting the treaties and all articles of them without the least reserve to be seen by a small committee of both Houses who may report to you, and I assure you there is no other treaty with France either before or since which shall not be made known.”¹

In saying this Charles told a deliberate untruth. The treaty produced to the House was the Treaty of 1672, a copy, specially prepared for the purpose, of the so-called *Traité Simulé*, the original provisions of which, together with the far more embarrassing document, the Treaty of Dover, or *Traité de Madame*, neither Charles nor his ministers ever dreamt of divulging to anybody. There can be no excuse for such a flagrant falsehood; no wonder Charles “fumbled in delivering it and made it worse than in the print.”²

There can be no excuse for such a deliberate untruth, but there was ample reason.

A curious account has been given by Burnet, on the authority of Buckingham, as to the composition of the Speeches from the Throne. Clarendon during his chancellorship wrote all the King's speeches, but now “they were composed in Cabinet, one minister putting in one period and one made another, so that all was not of a piece.”³

This procedure had evidently been followed on the occasion of the opening of the twelfth session of Parliament; indeed, Lord Conway, in a letter to Essex, directly states: “It was the consultation of many days and nights which produced it.” Forceful reasons urged ministers to conciliate and satisfy Parliament, if only for a time; Charles and his Cabinet alike concurred in this desire, and certainly a few lies, more or less, would not be permitted to stand in the way of such a desirable conclusion.

Hatred of popery, distrust of France, stirred the nation; threats of impeachment filled the air, and the threats might

¹ “Parliamentary History,” p. 611; Journals of the House of Commons.

² Essex Papers, Conway to Essex, p. 161.

³ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 239.

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become a reality unless Parliament received satisfaction ; moreover, peace with Holland hung in the balance, a peace earnestly desired by the people, but which, as the Government knew, could only be obtained if the fact reached home to the Dutch that the English fleet lay ready to sail at a moment's notice. " If the further progress of this fleet be stopt for want of your concurrence, make account all hopes of peace are stopped too," wisely declared Lord-Keeper Finch.

Yet the House of Commons chose to ignore this warning and proceeded to proclaim a general fast for " calamities which are chiefly occasioned by the undermining contrivances of Popish recusants, whose numbers and insolencies are greatly of late increased and whose restless practices threaten a subversion of both Church and State." ¹

Depressed probably by the prospect of a solemn fast, the Commons then gladly laid serious duties aside and availed themselves of an opportunity afforded by one of their number of spending, or wasting, their time in a more sportive manner by entering into a long and discursive argument as to whether Mr. Mallett might read a lengthy speech. This concession was, at last, allowed him owing to one of the anti-court members, Mr. Garroway, putting forward the unanswerable plea that perhaps " Mallett cannot contract his notions as other men do ; let him read his speech, you can but wink and it's the same thing." ²

The " Mother of Parliaments " does not materially change even in the lapse of two and a half centuries.

From sporting one with another the House soon proceeded to hunt more serious game. " At this great baiting one of the bears intended to be brought to the stake is his Grace of Lauderdale," writes Rosse, the King's librarian, to Williamson. The prognostication proved true, as the House, after declaring the general fast, fell with sharpened appetite on the members of the Cabal. Resolutions demanding the removal of the Duke of Lauderdale passed without any great

¹ " Parliamentary History," p. 616.

² *Ibid.*, p. 620.

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opposition, and the Commons then hastened to attack the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Arlington.

Buckingham foresaw the storm which might burst over him, and with characteristic address endeavoured to prepare a shelter for himself by personally courting all the members in town ; “ the debauchees by drinking with them, the sober by grave and serious discourse, the pious by receiving the Sacrament at Westminster so that he thought he had gained a strong party of friends ; and because he is of the opinion that the Parliament must have a sacrifice to appease them his greatest endeavour with all men . . . is to characterise the Lord Arlington as the most pernicious person in his Majesty’s Counsailles.” ¹

This scheme, however, availing little, he asked permission to appear before the Commons and address them, but even Buckingham’s effrontery quailed before the chilling reception the House accorded him.

“ He behaved himself as meanly, to say no worse, as could be,” spoke in a confused and incoherent manner “ a discourse full of distractions,” in which he endeavoured to “ lay all the load ” he could on Arlington, and practically said nothing to the point in his own defence except the enigmatical remark, which many thought was intended to reflect upon the King and the Duke of York, “ that he was weary of the company he was joined with, for a man might kill with a pack of beagles but could not hunt with a brace of lobsters.” ²

The Commons resolved to petition the King to dismiss Buckingham also, and then fell once more upon the last minister, Arlington.

To the surprise of all Arlington rose to the occasion.

His address to the House, an hour and a quarter long, made a deep impression, being full of “ modesty, clearness and evenness of temper.” Nobody could have behaved himself “ more like a nobleman and a man of parts ” ; with such address did he defend himself that the Commons to all

¹ Williamson, Vol. II., p. 105.

² Williamson, Letters, Vol. II., p. 115.

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intent and purposes acquitted him, though after a long debate. "The House then put it to have candles or no, my lord's friends were for ajorning and no candles, the others for candles and sit it out, but my lord's ¹ friends carried it by many votes."

The action of the Commons, however, made clear to Charles that he could no longer retain the services of his ministers unless he wished for an embittered and prolonged contest with Parliament. This he had no mind to undertake, and the conduct of neither Buckingham nor Arlington was such as to conciliate their master. Buckingham, in his address to the Commons, openly broke his oath as a privy councillor, betrayed secret deliberations and told palpable falsehoods; Arlington twisted and turned, showing himself a coward at heart. Well might Charles say that when he went to look for a wise and honest man he did not know where to find one.

Acting on the resolution of the House, the King therefore forthwith dismissed Buckingham from his service, who immediately joined himself to Shaftesbury as a reckless and virulent opponent of the court.

Although during the debates in Parliament Charles used his influence on behalf of his old comrade, "sticks very close to Arlington, who has a fair game to play," ² is the graphic phrase of one on the spot, yet he never again admitted him to his full confidence, but, directing him to sell his secretaryship of state to Sir Joseph Williamson for £6,000, conferred on him, in lieu of that important office, the more exalted but far less influential dignity of Lord Chamberlain.

Lauderdale, useful, competent and reliable, the King kept in his service, but as a political force the Cabal ceased to exist.

Under these circumstances, faced by war abroad and troubles at home, Charles turned for help to his new Treasurer, Sir Thomas Osborne. Danby, to use the title conferred on him in 1674, possessed two notable qualities which

¹ Williamson. Letters, Vol. II., p. 121.

² Essex Papers, p. 164.

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well fitted him to deal with the crisis—a distinct understanding of the important and ever-increasing influence which Parliament, and especially the Lower House, intended to exercise over the government of the country, and a clear perception that no monarch could make headway against the threatened encroachments on his prerogative unless he enjoyed a revenue sufficient for his immediate wants and became largely independent of parliamentary supplies.

To the task of manipulating the Commons and regulating the finances the Treasurer therefore devoted his great abilities with distinguished success.

Hitherto the policy of the King and Cabinet lay entirely in the direction of obtaining the support of the great nobles of the country or of the powerful leaders of political thought. Danby moved in exactly the opposite direction ; he left the leaders alone, but utilised the patronage and revenue of the Crown to purchase the support of a sufficient number of the rank and file to secure to the ministry a phalanx of interested votes in the Lower House of the Legislature whose perquisites depended on the goodwill of the Crown and Government.

It must not be thought that Danby initiated this practice of debauching and corrupting the Commons ; far from it. He but followed the example of every foreign ambassador, for as far back as 1661 Count Molina, the Spanish representative, openly stated that he bribed British members of Parliament ; while the despatches of each French envoy contain statements to the effect that, at that time, the English Parliament was very susceptible to mercenary considerations.¹

But Danby reduced the practice to a system. Reresby relates the process by which he and other members of the House of Commons were presented to the King, with what charm and fascination the Sovereign received them, speaking to each, knowing something of their personal history, and expressing hopes that they would support and assist him.²

¹ Ranke, Vol. III., p. 463.

² Reresby, pp. 188, 191.

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Yet later the same writer is forced to admit that, though the Lord Treasurer ordered it the King's party increased rather than the other, yet it was to be feared that some votes were obtained more by purchase than affection. "You did not vote against me to-day,"¹ said Charles affably to Hervey. "No, Sir," replied the member of Parliament; "I voted against my conscience."

By judicious measures of collection, by a careful exercise of economy in legitimate expenditure and ruthless curtailment of illicit profuseness, the capable minister succeeded in putting the finances into order. The necessary economies provoked bitter complaints from many distinguished people who were wroth that they could no longer dip their hands into the King's pocket. "Anglesey swore that he knew not how to go to market, Keeper grumbled as much as any, and Arlington, I heard, took it ill his private intelligence money should not be reckoned as an indispensable thing."²

Although a high appreciation of the Treasurer's valuable qualities induced Charles to retain his services and assist his efforts, yet in no way did King and minister look eye to eye in matters of domestic or foreign policy.

Danby, following the example of Clarendon, supported himself by appealing to the prejudices of the old Cavaliers, whether it might be in the direction of their desire for the supremacy of the Anglican Church, and the repression of all recusants, whether Protestant or Popish, or their growing hatred of the French alliance. He desired to see Charles revert to the policy of the Triple Alliance and join the coalition of European Powers for the purpose of debasing France.

Charles meant to do none of these things.

At the time when he listened to the pacific overtures of Spain he offered to Louis his services as mediator for a general peace, and so far succeeded in assuaging the irritated susceptibilities of the French court that it consented to send envoys to a conference which eventually met at Nimuegen.

¹ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 255.

² Essex Papers, p. 199.

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Lord Berkeley, Sir Richard Temple, and Sir Leoline Jenkins represented Charles ; but by no efforts on their part could they bring about any practical result, Louis being only anxious to secure the neutrality or effacement of England until he could consolidate his conquests, and William of Orange, then as ever, consumed with hatred of the French and with a burning desire, afterwards fulfilled, to make Great Britain an instrument for his revenge and a catspaw for obtaining advantages for the Dutch provinces.¹

But Charles at least was sincere in his efforts ; he wanted peace. War only brought to him expense and trouble, a weight his finances were unable to bear and a state of dependence on Parliament unpleasant alike to his ease and his pride.

Moreover, although the result of the war proved indecisive in each case, the country now began to reap the benefit of the policy for which he fought. The nation prospered exceedingly, the channels of trade all flowing in the direction of Great Britain ; certainly he did not mean to jeopardise this happy state of affairs by plunging into a new contest in conjunction with allies for whom he entertained no particular attachment, and against a monarch the object of his regard and affectionate respect.

Yet if Parliament had shown the least disposition to treat him fairly it is probable that Charles would have met them half-way. "King is firme in the interest of France ; if Parliament be so calme and prudent as to give him money they may buy him off from France and the Duke," was the opinion of one who lived in the inner circle of the court ; and although the logic of circumstances shows that Charles would never have deserted his brother, it is equally certain that reasonable consideration of the financial difficulties which depressed the national Exchequer would have met with a very friendly response from the embarrassed monarch.²

But Parliament showed no disposition whatsoever to change its attitude ; it never gave one penny except as the

¹ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 234 ; Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 300.

² Essex Papers, p. 153.



THE EARL OF DANBY.
From the Painting by John Greenhill.

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price of some fresh religious restriction or some lopped limb of royal prerogative, and invariably controlled its policy, not by the needs of the country, but by the opportunities for thwarting the King.

Even the calm judicious Essex, an opponent of Danby, condemned the spirit which pervaded the Commons. With cold satire he writes : " Meantime his Majesty's affairs are in a good position, since the two factions are separately resolved that the public shall not be supplied unless it came purely by one of their means, each endeavouring by some bye-way to obstruct what the other doeth." ¹

Encouraged by the success of their onslaught on ministers the Commons proceeded to make a further attack on royal prerogative, and passed a resolution against the raising of any military forces except the militia. For some time past they had pressed heavily on the King's patience. At the risk of losing whatever supply the House might be induced to vote, Charles, tersely remarking that he would rather be " a poor king than no king," on his own initiative suddenly prorogued Parliament on the 24th February, greatly to the surprise and disgust of members. ² " I never saw such consternation as was among the members of both Houses, every man amazed and reproaching one another that they had sat so long on eggs and could hatch nothing." Guilty consciences also appear to have troubled some of them, for an account is given of a party of the Opposition who, having ordered a dinner at the Swan Tavern in King Street, on news of the prorogation left the viands to be eaten by their host, Mr. Dod, and his family, while they themselves scurried off to the City to escape the royal wrath, which, from their actions, it is evident they deserved. ³

Having got rid of the factious Commons, Charles turned his efforts in the direction of rearranging the Administration.

" Duke, Treasurer and Lauderdale govern all," wrote one of the inveterate gossips of the day ; but in reality Charles,

¹ Essex Papers, p. 322.

² " Parliamentary History."

³ Essex Papers, p. 180 ; Williamson, Letters, p. 157.

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knowing the critical condition of affairs, exerted himself indefatigably ; “ ’tis wonderful to see him shut up in the morning several hours with Arlington and the same day as many with Duke, Treasurer and Lauderdale.” ¹

In foreign politics he acted entirely as his own minister. William of Orange in the month of June sent ambassadors to his uncle, ostensibly for the purpose of discussing a general peace, but, in reality, to endeavour to obtain a promise of intervention from England for the defence of Flanders and, eventually, an offensive and defensive alliance against France ; at the same time they were instructed to hint that William would not be indisposed to visit this country and personally interview the King.

They met with but little success, Charles informing them that for seven years he had done far more for Flanders than for France and had only received ingratitude from Spain for his pains, while from the Most Christian King he had accepted many kindnesses and should indeed be *un grand coquin* if he did not feel all his life indebted to him.² Hearing also that Shaftesbury, restless and intriguing, not only corresponded with the Dutch but also began an organised attempt to incite discontent among the citizens of London, Charles peremptorily commanded that peer to retire to his country house, and then completely counteracted, in his own individual manner, the designs of the subtle ex-minister by dining in state with the Lord Mayor and receiving next day, in the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall, the Corporation of London, who conferred on the King the freedom of the City “ in a massy gold box studded with valuable diamonds.” ³

The project of a visit to England from William of Orange greatly disturbed the equanimity of the French King and his agent Ruvigny ; they discovered that the Dutch ambassadors, discomfited by Charles’s coolness, intended making overtures to the Anti-Court party in Parliament, and later

¹ Essex Papers, pp. 253, 286.

² Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 318.

³ Christie, “ Shaftesbury,” p. 198 ; Kennett, p. 300.

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they learnt the even more alarming news that Charles himself intended to send a mission, consisting of Arlington and Ossory, to William for the purpose of sounding him regarding a marriage between himself and the little Princess Mary, eldest daughter of James, Duke of York.¹

This design, strongly urged by Arlington, who hoped by its success to reinstate himself in royal and public favour, fell through for the time being; but the anxiety of the French envoy continued, and, on behalf of his master, he offered to the English King £100,000 if that monarch would dissolve Parliament, or, at least, prorogue it for twelve months.²

Both Louis and his ministers entertained, theoretically, a profound respect for Parliament, strangely in antagonism to the sordid treatment they practically applied to the members. Louis' opinion of the Commons may perhaps be traced to the description of that institution given to him previously by his ambassador, de Cominges, who wrote many details to his master of our parliamentary constitution, attributing the powers of the Lower House to such diverse sources as the Laws of the Medes and Persians, the Book of Daniel, and William the Conqueror; further stating that it first sat in Stonehenge, but, nevertheless, always applying to it the epithet of "auguste."³

To the pecuniary offer Charles returned a negative answer, stating that, owing to the great increase in the national trade accruing through the war, he received from the customs £150,000 more than before. As the term of the prorogation approached its close the various foreign envoys displayed great activity, for on the decision of Parliament hung, so they believed, the event of peace or war; consequently continental Powers furnished their representatives with large quantities of money, the only arguments then powerful with the British Senate.

Monsieur Gentz, the Danish resident, received funds

¹ Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 322.

² *Ibid.*, p. 331.

³ Jusserand, p. 102.

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from the United Provinces in order that he might keep a good table and for other purposes ; Van Beuninghen, the Dutch envoy, took a handsome house in the neighbourhood of Westminster, and also exercised large but discriminate hospitality, so that " he might collect the most factious and persuade them by his speeches, his presents and his good cheer " ; while the Spanish ambassadors behaved so audaciously that their French colleagues declared : " To do them justice they ought to be in prison." ¹

Ruvigny also actively bestirred himself, but to his credit it must be said that he heartily disliked " le sale traffique," as he rightly called it ; indeed, a more disgraceful epoch in the history of parliamentary government it is impossible to imagine ; a more self-seeking, ill-conditioned, corrupt House of Commons never sat even in the second decade of the twentieth century, although, to do the Parliament of Charles justice, it must be said that, with all its evil doing, it yet stopped short of voting, as its successor has done, public money for its own corruption.

The Houses sat on the 13th April, 1675. The King in his Speech from the Throne laid the usual stress on his desire to extinguish the fears and jealousies of popery and to show his zeal for the Protestant religion as it is established in the Church of England, " from which I will never depart " ; he also expressed an undoubtedly sincere belief in the absolute necessity for the proper maintenance of the fleet. ²

The first sitting of the Commons unmistakably revealed the temper of the Opposition : they dutifully commenced with a formal vote of thanks to the King ; then followed it with a motion calling on him to withdraw from the service of France the English troops which gave such doughty service to Louis. On the peremptory refusal of Charles to consider such a suggestion a violent scene ensued, swords were drawn, disorder reigned and only the tact and ascendancy of the Speaker restored decorum. ³

¹ Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 334.

² " Parliamentary History," p. 673.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 708.

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Foiled in this direction the Anti-Court party made an onslaught on the Lord Treasurer by moving his impeachment ; again they sought defeat, an opponent of Danby declaring that " he got off by high bribing." This probably was the fact, for a member of the Commons naïvely asserted that he hoped to make £5,000 during the session, which again might be true, as " the whole House became very chargeable to the King and odious to the nation," so Marvell confessed, adding bitterly, " We are all venal cowards except some few." ¹

Emboldened by his escape, the Treasurer introduced into the House of Lords, and probably, but for an unforeseen circumstance, would have carried into law, a Bill imposing upon every person who filled an office under the Crown, whether civil, military, or ecclesiastical, an oath " that it is not lawful under any pretence whatsoever to take up arms against the King "; it also further declared, an asseveration even more unpalatable to a considerable section of members, " that any attempted alteration of Church or State would be equally unlawful." ²

By this new test not only Roman Catholics but all Protestant Nonconformists found themselves completely shut out from public employment, the entire administration of the country being placed in the hands of members of the Church of England alone. Not only those who dissented from that body but the whole Anti-Court party ranged themselves against such a sweeping measure ; " it grew to perhaps the greatest contest which has ever been in Parliament," an interested combatant declared.

Shaftesbury and Buckingham used their utmost address, eloquence and powers of intrigue against an enactment which would have placed the executive control of the country in the hands of the court and its friends. Their efforts proved of small account ; the Bill passed the House of Lords, although doubts were expressed as to whether it could go through the Commons, the two sections of that

¹ Marvell, Vol. II., p. 441.

² " Parliamentary History," p. 714.

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House, according to the testimony of Sir John Reresby, being so evenly divided that "neither dared stand the chance of a question."¹

At this moment a controversy arose concerning the appellative powers of the House of Lords; a Dr. Shirley appealing to the Upper Chamber against a decision which had been given in a case in which Sir John Fagg, a member of the Commons, appeared as defendant.

Even Andrew Marvell, a bitter and persistent antagonist of ministers, allowed that the Lords possessed an undoubted right to act as the supreme court of the nation; but the opportunity of fomenting divisions between the Houses, and thus escaping from an awkward predicament, did not escape the eye of the astute Shaftesbury, who, with Buckingham's assistance, "took hold of it and blew the coals to such an extent that there was no quenching them."²

The quarrel grew so fierce as to become a public scandal; unfortunate officers and unlucky lawyers, being physically unable to obey absolutely diverse directions, found themselves committed to prison by one or other of the contending powers.

The debates lasted sixteen or seventeen days, the King frequently attending the proceedings, standing in front of the fire listening with interest to the speeches, for, as he said with wonted cynicism when questioned concerning this assiduity, "Odd's fish! it's better than a play!"

Evidently he only concurred with Marvell's aphorism, "How dull a thing is human eloquence," when the output was from the pulpit, not from the forum.

At last, however, even Charles's patient contempt became exhausted; fearing the effect of the prolonged controversy on public opinion, he prorogued the House until October, after sharply expressing his opinion of the conduct of both parties.³

On reassembling Shaftesbury pursued the same tactics,

¹ Reresby, p. 179.

² Marvell, Vol. IV., p. 304.

³ "Parliamentary History," p. 740.

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and the quarrel would have continued with increasing acrimony had not Charles taken the unusual and drastic course of again proroguing Parliament, this time for fifteen months, sternly informing the Houses "that he did not intend to let their differences grow to disorder," and that if they "chose to debate their privileges, he would not suffer his own to be invaded."¹

By this prorogation the non-resisting Test Bill failed to become law, and the Commons refused to take into consideration the question of the anticipations on the revenue; neither did they vote a supply, being induced to omit this most necessary operation by the dexterity of the Spanish ambassador, who feared that any vote they might give would be applied to the advantage of France.

But the lack of supply deprived the King of a much-needed addition to his sorely pressed exchequer. Under these circumstances Charles naturally turned towards the same source from which formerly he obtained the required assistance, his cousin the Most Christian King.

At this time, owing to the death of the great Turenne and to certain reverses which his arms had sustained, Louis more than ever desired the neutrality of England. Being informed by Ruvigny of the deep-seated hostility to France evinced by the Lower House, the French Monarch urged the English King to dissolve Parliament and offered £100,000 as an inducement; but Charles consistently refused to take this course, being strongly convinced that a fresh House of Commons would include a large proportion of Presbyterians, by policy and religion distinctly adverse to his administration.²

But the financial position imperatively demanded consideration, so the Duke of York specifically asked Ruvigny to procure a subsidy, and, although Louis felt inclined to haggle over the terms, his ambassador so strongly expressed an opinion that such impolitic bargaining would only alienate both Charles and his brother, that, after some

¹ "Parliamentary History," p. 803.

² Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 378.

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hesitation, Louis authorised the payment of the sum required in four annual instalments.¹

A reason of considerable importance urged Ruvigny to advise this step. Information reached him that the Lord Treasurer Danby, always inimical to the French alliance, was making strenuous efforts to persuade the King, even at the eleventh hour, to unite with his nephew William and the Dutch provinces. Charles, strong in the faith of his own policy, declined, and expressed to the inner Cabinet, consisting of James, Lauderdale and Danby, a desire for a direct agreement with France, without which, he declared, England would be sure to suffer.²

As the Duke of York and Lauderdale both agreed to this proposition, the Treasurer, perforce, yielded; but later, when the negotiations were well in progress and ripe for consummation, both Danby and Lauderdale represented to the King the heavy risk they personally would run if they were to sign and thus become parties to a secret document of such grave importance.

Charles objected to laying the instrument before the Council, for he feared, probably with reason, that, in the present position of public affairs, unless kept secret the alliance would never be completed; he therefore, to save his ministers from any danger, signed and sealed the treaty with his own hand.

Ruvigny in a despatch to Louis gives a graphic account of the incident:

“ He was resolved for the sake of greater secrecy to copy himself the draft which I had given him and sign it in my presence. This he did yesterday morning; after he had himself lighted a taper and placed his signet by the side of his signature he told me that it was only the seal with his cipher (*chiffre*) because a little time back he had lost the one with his arms which were engraved on a diamond belonging to King James his grandfather, which when the late King was on the scaffold he gave to the Bishop of London to place in his hands.”³

¹ Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 377.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

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Ruvigny also signed on behalf of the French King and, by way of precaution, confided the secret draft to the care of his own private secretary for conveyance to Louis.

In concluding this treaty Charles acted wisely. He believed—surely a well-founded belief—that England would benefit far more from a continuance of peace than from any union with Holland, which could only result in her becoming, as she became afterwards, the catspaw of the coalition. He knew that William fervently desired to draw Great Britain into the war, regardless of the fact that such action would in no way advance the material prosperity of these islands, and he did his best to prevent the design.

It is true that Charles took money from a foreign prince. His Parliament did the like, and, while receiving bribes from every continental Power as well as from their own Government, refused and neglected to take any steps to maintain the necessary defences of the country. "King said he had so long listened to these fooleries that he would ask Parliament nothing, but that if they thought fit he would be glad they took some care for the defence of the nation," is the testimony which one, distinctly adverse to Charles, gives of his sayings and thoughts.¹

In taking into his own hands the management of foreign relations and the control of peace and war, the King in no way acted unconstitutionally or beyond his traditional prerogatives. In the reign of Charles II. the government of the country was passing through a transitional period. Parliament aspired to the supervision and arrangement of all affairs relative to the welfare of the kingdom; but until this time, many matters over which the Commons desired to exercise jurisdiction had lain solely within the prerogative of the Crown, and the King cannot be blamed for asserting the powers which indubitably, up to then, belonged to the position he occupied, more especially as the existing House of Commons possessed no qualities to commend it either to a monarch or to any honest man.

¹ Essex Papers, p. 298.

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On the opening of Parliament in April, 1677, after the prolonged prorogation, crowds thronged the approaches to such an extent that members experienced considerable difficulty in getting to their places, and could only assuage their injured feelings by censuring the high bailiff at Westminster for his remissness in not maintaining better order in the streets.¹

Shaftesbury gained the credit for organising this evidence of popular excitement, many old officers of Cromwell's Fifth Monarchy men and fanatics being seen among the mob, while in the Houses themselves the conduct of the Opposition showed marks of his controlling hand.

Instigated by his astute colleague, at the first sitting, Buckingham moved that the unprecedented prorogation, in contravention of certain Acts of Edward III., amounted to a dissolution, and consequently neither House could legally sit or transact business.²

Shaftesbury with his utmost power and Lords Salisbury and Wharton supported this view, which, however, did not meet with unanimous approval even from those peers usually unfriendly to the court; the old Presbyterian Lord Holles bluntly repudiating the contention and Lord Halifax ending his speech by advancing strong arguments against a dissolution, although, with characteristic trimming, he started by advocating exactly the opposite course.

The remainder of the Lords violently opposed the motion, even going so far, probably on Danby's instigation, as to call on Buckingham and the other recalcitrant peers to apologise for contemning Parliament by thus questioning its authority.³

On their refusal to make any submission all four noblemen were committed to the Tower, whereupon they added to their offence by requesting permission from the King for their cooks to accompany them, thus implying that their enemies intended to inflict a dose both of prison and poison.

Playing to the gallery by such insinuations formed one

¹ Journals of the House of Commons.

² "Parliamentary History," p. 814.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 824; Burnet, Vol. I., p. 268.

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of the newly-contrived weapons in Shaftesbury's political armoury and, for a time, proved very efficient by interesting the populace in his daily sayings and doings ; if he had lived in the twentieth century he would probably have become the proprietor of a halfpenny newspaper, but, in the days of Charles, broad-sheets and the gossip at coffee-houses supplied the place of a cheap Press, an astute demagogue taking care that his followers should disseminate by these means any fiction which might be considered likely to influence the mob.

The House of Lords strongly opposed a dissolution ; the House of Commons even more angrily dissented from such a course.

Many of the members, knowing full well the extremely problematical chance they possessed of being again returned to Parliament, objected, not unnaturally, to losing the golden stream which flowed from the various embassies as well as from the national Treasury. With considerable dexterity Danby, playing upon these feelings, obtained from the House a vote of supply for £600,000 for the purpose of restoring and maintaining the Fleet, Pepys, who "spoke more like an admiral than a secretary," influencing those present by a strong speech in favour of the proposal, declaring from his own knowledge, obtained at the Navy Office, that the King himself disbursed nearly £400,000 on dockyard expenditure during the year.¹

But the Commons, having gone thus far in the direction desired by ministers, then stopped short. They rejected a Bill imposing on the monarch an oath against transubstantiation, accompanied, in the event of refusal, by the loss of all the ecclesiastical patronage of the Crown, the bare suggestion of the possibility of a popish king being offensive to them ; they further passed a resolution calling on Charles to join the European coalition and prepare for hostilities against France—a direct and novel attempt to place the control of foreign relations within the jurisdiction of the House.

¹ "Parliamentary History," p. 835.

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Charles accepted the challenge. Summoning the Commons to attend him, he informed them in stern and precise language that by their resolution they infringed an undoubted right of the Crown ; and he continued : " Should I suffer this fundamental power of making peace and war to be so far invaded (though but once) as to have the name and circumstances of leagues presented to me by Parliament, it is plain that no prince or State would any longer believe that the sovereignty of England rests in the Crown, nor could I think myself to signify any more to foreign princes than the empty sound of a King " ; and thereupon he adjourned them to July.¹

Not content therewith, Charles also introduced an innovation and, for the first time on record, printed in the "*Gazette*" his Speech from the Throne ; " to point them out to their own and other nations as refractory disobedient subjects who had lost all respect to majesty," complains one writer ; while Marvell bitterly remarks : " The Parliament has grown to that height of contempt as to be gazetted among runaway servants, lap dogs, strayed horses and highway robbers "—a comprehensive description of the various parties in the Legislature, which may possibly have been in the mind of the King when, upon some remark of Van Beuninghen, the Dutch ambassador, he tossed his handkerchief in the air and said : " I care just that for Parliament." ²

Though Charles thus strongly resented the interference of the Commons in a prerogative hitherto unchallenged, yet for some time past his policy had been tending in the very direction indicated by the Lower House.

The question of the succession to the throne presented greater difficulties every day.

The Queen had no children ; the King too many. By the death of the infant son of James and Mary of Modena, who died a few weeks after his birth, the two daughters of James

¹ " Parliamentary History," p. 889.

² Marvell, Vol. IV., p. 307.

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and Anne Hyde, Mary and Anne, both members of the Anglican Church, became the heirs presumptive.

In default of either of these children of James, William of Orange inherited the Crown of England, as heir in the direct line, his mother being a daughter of Charles I. From the moment when popular opinion grew to believe that the Duke of York professed Catholicism, politicians, some from conscience some for personal reasons, sought for a Protestant successor to the throne, for although the daughters of James were confirmed in the Anglican Church, both their sex and the detested religion of their parents combined to create a desire for a male successor to the then existing King.

Halifax and thoughtful men of his stamp naturally turned towards William ; Shaftesbury, who for reasons of his own disliked the Prince of Orange, put forward an audacious scheme and endeavoured to get the King to further it. He wished Charles to acknowledge the young Duke of Monmouth as his lawful progeny, although the only established fact concerning the parentage of this unfortunate young man was that he had been born the son of Lucy Walters, Mrs. Barlow, the " beautiful brown insipid creature," as Evelyn describes her, with whom Charles formed a connection in the early days of his exile. James, Duke of York, a tainted witness perhaps, always declared that Monmouth resembled in every respect, even to the wart on his face, Colonel Robert Sidney, to whom Lucy Walters acted as mistress before she met the King ; but still Charles not only acknowledged the boy as his natural son, married him to a great Scotch heiress, the daughter of the Duke of Buccleuch, but also extended great kindness and indulgence towards him.¹

Of handsome face and graceful figure, the mental qualities were in no way commensurate with the external attraction, for, as Reresby quaintly observes, " although the duke was quite finished as to his exterior his inside was by no means of a piece therewith." Indulged by his royal and putative father, flattered by the courtiers, used and befooled by

¹ " James' Life," p. 490.

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Shaftesbury, no wonder that the young man became inflated with exalted ideas.

At his solicitation Charles revived for him the post of commander-in-chief of the army. In the commission he was described as the "natural" son of the King. The foolish youth caused the word "natural" to be erased, and although Charles reinstated it with his own hand, yet the lesson so far failed in effect that later on Monmouth actually bore the Royal Arms, without the bar sinister, on his coach. Only the common sense of Lauderdale, who altered the words "for life" to those of "during his Majesty's pleasure," prevented his being appointed permanently commander of the troops in Scotland, a post to which he aspired and which, if he had gained, would have produced serious effects on the northern kingdom.

Shaftesbury, by means of his political organisation, caused rumours to be circulated concerning an early marriage of the King, when in exile, with this Mrs. Barlow, the proofs of which were contained in a mysterious black box which figured largely among the gossip and rumours of the period.

This scheme was pushed with great address and assiduity, but came to nothing, for on the subject of the legitimate succession to the throne Charles held firm and deep-seated convictions; twice officially he stated that the rumours were false, that the Queen alone held the position of his lawful wife, and when Burnet one day told him that a report existed that he, the King, intended to legitimatise the Duke of Monmouth and make him the heir, "he answered quickly, that well as he loved him he would rather see him hanged first." ¹

Yet, though Charles adopted such a decided course in the matter, the attempt opened his eyes to many dangers which threatened the succession, and consequently again he endeavoured to bring about a marriage between William of Orange and his niece Mary, a union which would combine the legitimate heirs to the throne and ensure that the future monarch should be a member of a Protestant Church.

¹ Burnet, p. 290.

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Three years before Charles attempted the same negotiations but failed ; now circumstances made the prospect of success more favourable. Troubles and defeat clustered round the young stadtholder, and an alliance with Great Britain would be of inestimable value ; but, though the union was desired by both parties, difficulties existed, not political, it is true, but yet likely to throw obstacles in the way of the desired match.

William, with all his great qualities, possessed none of the physical or mental attractiveness apt to fascinate a high-born girl. He himself confessed to Temple that it might not perhaps "be very easy for a wife to live with him ; but if his wife were such as should give him trouble at home 'twas what he should not be able to bear." ¹

When the prince arrived in England neither his presence nor demeanour favourably impressed those he met. Society pronounced him to be "the plainest man ever seen and of no fashion at all" ; and apparently the poor little princess did not anticipate a happy fate, for when her father, after dinner, took her into his room and told her concerning the marriage which was arranged for her, she wept all that afternoon and the following day. ²

The Queen, kind-hearted soul, tried to comfort the child, but upon her Majesty speaking of her own condition, who had never seen even the King before marriage, Mary, with true insular pride, exclaimed : "But, Madam, you were coming to England ; I am going away from England !"

It is true that William made a poor impression both on his destined bride and the throng of courtiers, but that keen judge of men, the King, himself discerned the sterling qualities under the mean and uninviting exterior : "I never yet was deceived in judging of a man's honesty by his looks, and if I am not deceived in the prince's face he is the honestest man in the world and I will trust him and he shall have his wife, and you may tell my brother so that it is a thing I am resolved on." ³

¹ Temple, Vol. II., p. 335.

² Verney Memoirs, p. 237 ; Lake's Memoirs.

³ Temple, Vol. II., p. 421.

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James, though somewhat astonished and but little pleased, had sense enough to acquiesce, and the marriage was arranged with great public joy, Arlington, between whom and William no love was lost, and the French ambassador being the only two dissatisfied people in the court. The London mob were delighted with the announcement, and showed their joy in the singularly appropriate manner of burning the Pope "in effigy with a bellyful of cats."¹

When Temple first met William some eight or nine years previously he described him as "showing extremely good agreeable humour and disposition . . . without any vice, being sleepy always at 10 o'clock at night and loving hunting as much as he hated swearing, and prefers cock ale to any sort of wine." On the prince's first visit to England, however, he fell a victim to the dissolute atmosphere which always surrounded Buckingham, for one night after a supper in the duke's house, becoming, at the instigation of the King, riotously tipsy, he broke the windows and forced his way into the chambers of the maids of honour, which escapade in the opinion of the court should have greatly commended him to his destined bride "as a notable indication of his vigour."²

On the 4th November, 1677, the prince's own birthday, Compton, Bishop of London, quietly married the young couple, the King himself being present and taking a prominent part in the festivities and equivocal ceremonies which, in those unrefined days, attended the celebration of the marriage tie.

According to usual custom Charles led the bride to the nuptial chamber and departed, after giving some characteristic words of advice and encouragement to the newly-married pair, concluding with the patriotic ejaculation "And St. George for merrie England."³

In making advances to William of Orange, and in furthering to the best of his ability the marriage between his nephew

¹ Temple, Vol. II., p. 422 ; Hatton, Vol. I., p. 157.

² Temple, Vol. I., p. 285 ; Reresby, p. 173.

³ Lake's Diary.

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and his niece, Charles worked primarily for the object he held supreme, the maintenance of the throne and the legitimate succession ; but he also strove honestly to effect a general peace, and believed that this marriage would facilitate that desirable object. At one time Temple feared that the negotiations would be broken off because the prince insisted on the marriage arrangements being settled before the subject of peace was discussed, while the King urged that the conditions of a general peace should be formulated before entering into any details of a matrimonial union between the families.

Charles, impressed by the steadfastness and sincerity of William, gave way and the marriage took place, but immediately afterwards, in conjunction with William, Temple and Danby, he began the preliminaries of a definite treaty which he hoped would be satisfactory to France and Holland and cause the cessation of hostilities. Earlier in the year the Opposition in Parliament refused all supplies unless England entered into a league with the coalition against France ; to produce this resolution both the Dutch and the Austrian ambassadors bribed heavily, the former being provided by the Spanish Government with 50,000 crowns, the latter, Count Wallenstein, with 10,000 pistoles.¹

Charles, true to his belief in the advantage of an alliance with France, refused his assent to the motion of the Commons, although they offered him £1,200,000 as a subsidy for carrying out their purpose ; but, by this refusal, the treasury became absolutely empty of funds necessary for the ordinary purposes of Government ; the King, therefore, accepted £174,000 from France and promised Courtin that he would prorogue Parliament until 1678, and thus provide France with a breathing space free from the fear of British interference.²

Writers of history describe the transaction as disgraceful, and the subsequent arrangement for the marriage of William and Mary as another instance of the complete lack of

¹ Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 473.

² "Parliamentary History," p. 889.

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sincerity and gross dissimulation which pervaded the nature of this Stuart king, who after taking the money of his friend immediately betrayed that friend's interest.

Neither of these contentions will bear examination. An historian such as Ranke, imbued with Germanic predilections, allows that at that time the English Parliament provided the wrestling ground for foreign nations ; the decisions of the House of Commons were not governed by the necessities and wants of the nation, but by the bribes offered by the ministers of foreign Powers or the inducements of place or money furnished by the royal Treasurer.

The House of Commons refused to vote supplies essential for the welfare of the nation unless the King entered into a policy absolutely averse to that which he believed advantageous to the interests of the country, and which would plunge the nation into a war from which it could gain no material advantage whatsoever, but which, on the other hand, might entail the loss of the commercial benefits it then enjoyed.

It is allowed, even by unfriendly biographers, that the expansion of the national trade formed the second great object of Charles's desire ; for this purpose he entered into the Dutch wars, and after the sacrifices these wars entailed he did not feel disposed, at the bidding of the Spanish and Austrian envoys, to throw away the ever-increasing advantages which accrued from them.

When Parliament, notoriously influenced by foreign money, endeavoured to bring the Government to a standstill Charles prevented the design by proroguing the offender. Doubtless such an act to-day, or indeed at any time after the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement, would be a gross violation of the Constitution, but in the year 1679, in the midst of a distinctly transitional period of constitutional history, in thus behaving the King did not exceed his prerogative, and he indubitably acted according to his political convictions.

Neither did Charles deceive the French King, nor unduly assail the interests of his ally. Barillon, the ambassador

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who, in September, supplanted Courtin, knew that the question of the marriage of the Prince of Orange with the Princess Mary was in contemplation. The Duke of York personally informed him of all particulars, and the King, calling him on one side at the court, explained at length the reasons for considering that this match alone could dispel the suspicion which the duke's religion engendered in the British people and the acute enmity to France which resulted therefrom. Charles declared to Barillon :

“ All the jealousy and passion which people have in this country against the prosperity of France comes from the duke declaring his religion. In the first war, they looked upon all the conquests that were made in Flanders with indifference, and cared little about them, but since the Duke of York professed the Catholic religion, all England has been in motion. . . . I am assured that the marriage of the Prince of Orange with my niece will dissipate a part of these suspicions.”¹

Moreover, in considering the terms of peace, the English monarch showed great consideration for the interests of his Most Christian brother. He insisted that it would be both useless and unfair to expect Louis to disgorge the territory he had absorbed, and when both William and himself finally agreed upon specific conditions of peace, Charles, instead of sending Temple, a *persona ingrata*, to Louis, as ambassador, despatched Louis Duras, Lord Faversham, a Frenchman born and bred, who would study the wishes and humour the susceptibilities of Le Grand Monarque.

The negotiations failed. It is difficult to see how Charles could have imagined that the French King in his hour of triumph would, from mere friendly disposition, acquiesce in conditions depriving him of a material portion of his gains ; possibly Charles hoped that the terms proposed might have been accepted as a basis of negotiation, but the further success of the French arms in Flanders provoked such widespread alarm in England that the King, in self-defence, felt

¹ Dalrymple, Vol. I., p. 179.

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constrained to call Parliament together earlier than he intended.

As Barillon wrote to Louis :

“ The King of England charges me to assure your Majesty, that only an indispensable necessity obliged him to act contrary to his engagement, but that the siege of St. Ghislain had given such alarm to the most moderate in England, that the wisest and those best affected towards his intentions have told him distinctly that they feel obliged to join with the party which intends to assure the safety of Flanders.”¹

Barillon, by his master's directions, tried the hitherto infallible method of subsidising the monarch and bribing the minister. He offered Charles £200,000, and Danby a “ very large sum of money,” but likewise firmly declared that the terms transmitted by Duras could not be accepted.²

Placed in a position of extreme difficulty, Charles, as on all such occasions, showed great capacity and ability. While still retaining his friendly feeling towards France and his desire to avoid, if possible, a conflict with her, he yet demonstrated plainly and distinctly the sincerity of his efforts for a general peace, and his determination not to permit any foreign Power to assume a position which threatened the safety or the welfare of this country.

If, in this crisis, he could have relied on the patriotic support of Parliament, assured success would have been obtained ; but the disappointed ambition of Shaftesbury caused that unprincipled statesman invariably to oppose the court, no matter whether the policy of the Crown might be sound or otherwise, and those members of both Houses who followed his lead readily lent themselves to the enemies of the country rather than allow the triumph of the royal wishes and designs.³

The pressure of the combined forces of England and Holland, the favourable terms already offered to Louis, who

¹ Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 519.

² *Ibid.*, p. 522.

³ Christie, “ Shaftesbury,” Vol. II., p. 276.

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under the proposed treaty retained possession of Franche Comté, together with the important towns of Aire, St. Omer, and Cambrai, probably would have induced the French monarch to consent to the conditions if one avenue of escape from the disagreeable necessity had not remained open.

Louis, although not in himself an exceptionally able man, yet owned that most valuable attribute, the power of finding efficient and faithful servants and retaining them as willing instruments in his service. Every ambassador who represented the French King fitted well the task which devolved upon him, for Louis sincerely believed in the dogma that "an ambassador should be an honest man, sent abroad to lie for the good of his country."

The most astute, unscrupulous and resourceful of them all, Paul Barillon d'Amoncourt, Marquis de Brange, at this time filled the post of minister of France at the Court of St. James's.

From his reports Louis perceived that, although no impression could now be made upon the determination of the English King, the shape which Parliament would take depended entirely upon the golden mould by which it might be enveloped.

Barillon received his orders ; corresponding results speedily accrued.

To Duras Louis condescended to offer a suspension of hostilities in the Netherlands for one year, and, later, proposed a general armistice, to which Charles gladly consented, but asked for an immediate truce of two months in order that the courts of Spain and Austria might be consulted on the matter.¹

This delay in no way fitted in with the French schemes. Louis hoped to begin his new campaign betimes ; his plans, as after events showed, were well considered, so this request for delay received an abrupt refusal.

Then, and not till then, Charles entered into a close alliance with his nephew and the United Provinces and

¹ Mignet, Vol. IV., pp. 522, 523.

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summoned Parliament, hitherto adjourned until April, to meet in January.

By the treaty with Holland both allies promised to assist each other by compelling, with combined forces, France and Spain to agree to the articles of the proposed peace. From Spain Charles demanded permission to land troops in Ostend for the defence of Flanders; he raised an army of 12,000 men, 11,000 infantry and 1,000 horse, and also commissioned thirty ships of war, ten to form a squadron in the Mediterranean, the remainder to be the Channel fleet; and lastly, he recalled the English troops which, for the past six years followed the flag of France.¹

Yet, notwithstanding these determined steps, he explained to Barillon that his amicable disposition to France remained unchanged, that he took these measures to show his Parliament that he would neglect nothing to preserve Flanders intact, and that if he waited for Parliament to interfere in the matter he, the King, would lose all credit for the transaction among his people.²

Parliament met on the 27th January after a short prorogation, to enable Montague, the English ambassador at the Louvre, to forward a definite answer from the French court. Charles, whose suspicions were strongly aroused, in opening the session made a manly and earnest appeal to his subjects. After narrating the means employed and the efforts prepared to ensure "an honourable and a safe peace for Christendom, knowing how preferable a peace would be especially to this kingdom, which must necessarily own the vast benefit it has received from peace while its neighbours only have yet smarted from the war," he detailed the forces required, ninety ships of war and 30,000 men at least, and, "because there shall be no fear of misemploying what you shall give to these uses, I am content that such money be appropriated to these ends as strictly as you can desire"; then, further detailing the amount already expended on refitting the old fleet and preparing stores and magazines, he

¹ Dalrymple, pp. 197 *et passim*.

² Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 529.

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concluded by asking for a plentiful supply suitable to meet great occasions ; “ whereon depend not only the honour, but, for aught I know, the being of our English nation.” ¹

To this appeal the Commons replied by formulating conditions obviously impossible of acceptance—the restriction of the French King to the territories retained by him in the Treaty of the Pyrenees, an absurd proviso, as, at that moment, Louis added the highly important positions of Ypres and Ghent to his already considerable conquests ; indeed, the response showed such an impracticable spirit that Charles, knowing too well the habits of his Parliament, cynically remarked to Barillon : “ They have lost their wits ; how much have you paid them for putting forward such extravagant proposals ? ” ²

Charles hit the mark. Louis’ instructions to his envoy contained a direction to use his best endeavours to encourage the King to hinder Parliament, and to assist Parliament in thwarting the King, should either take steps against France.

To still further this purpose Louis despatched the younger Ruvigny, a Protestant and near relative of Lord Russell, amply provided with funds to give “ guineas and promises ” to any English party accessible to corruption, to attack Lord Danby, regarded as a bitter foe to French interests, and to suborn, if possible, Lord Holles, Lord Russell and the Duke of Buckingham.

There is no evidence to show that either the old Presbyterian Holles or Lord Russell yielded to Barillon’s seductive efforts, although the former refused a diamond snuff-box, worth £1,500, in such a manner as, to say the least, did not preclude the offer being renewed ; but all three agreed to refuse supplies to Charles and thus avert danger from France, while Buckingham readily took all he could get, and in his train followed many of the leading men of the Country or Patriotic party, as Whig chroniclers are fond of calling it. Knowing the business habits of his Royal master, the

¹ “ Parliamentary History,” p. 897.

² Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 533.

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ambassador wrote a detailed despatch describing his efforts :

"I have given to the Duke of Buckingham 1,000 guineas, which makes £1,087 10s. sterling [Barillon loved to be precise]; to Mr. Sidney [the celebrated patriot Algernon Sidney be it remembered] 500 guineas, which makes £543 15s. sterling; to the Sieur Lyttelton 500 guineas; to the Sieur Powle 500 guineas; to the Sieur Harbord 500 guineas,"¹ and so on—the conscientious leaders of the Popular party, who, while ostensibly urging the King to a war with France, were receiving from the ambassador of that same Power substantial bribes to thwart the very policy they pretended to advocate.

No wonder Whig historians are heavily embarrassed in their efforts to find an apology for such conduct. One of the great lights of that party openly accused Barillon of embezzling the funds with which his master entrusted him and then covering the delinquency with a spurious list of those eminent politicians who, in reality, refused his subornation.² Other writers content themselves with the less far-fetched arguments that the Country party, knowing that King Charles received French money, deemed it also a worthy action to take bribes from the same source, so as to be able efficiently to resist their shameless monarch; or, to reverse the quotation, "That in the captain's flat blasphemy, which in the soldier is but a choleric word."

Despite all such casuistry few can doubt that Ruvigny spoke justly when he called it "a dirty traffic"; and all will agree with Dalrymple in his pathetic confession: "When I found in the French despatches Lord Russell intriguing with the Court of Versailles and Algernon Sidney taking money from it, I felt very near the same shock as if I had seen my son turn his back in the day of battle."³

Under the then existent circumstances it cannot be a matter of surprise that Charles held his Parliament in

¹ Dalrymple, p. 381.

² Lord John Russell, "Life of Lord Russell."

³ Dalrymple, Preface, p. xxiv.

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supreme contempt, and strove to go his own way without either confiding in or consulting with the Lower House of the Legislature.

It may, however, justly be said that he himself was largely to blame for the condition in which Parliament had fallen ; his intrigues concerning religion with France, though not known in detail, were yet suspected by a large number of members of both Houses. Even if he ever seriously intended an attempt to proselytise this country, a proposition concerning which the greatest doubts may be felt, he long had given up the idea, as his conversations and letters to Barillon distinctly show ; still, the doubt and distrust engendered by his conduct remained, which justified completely those few conscientious and high-minded men, of whom some still lived, who regarded the royal policy with dislike and the royal morals with censure.

Yet at this period Charles strove in earnest for that which he believed to be a wise and a beneficial end ; as Barillon bears witness, at first his sole efforts were to effect a peace : " The King of England still wavers upon carrying things to extremity . . . ; at bottom he would rather choose that a peace should leave him in a condition to remain in quiet and re-establish his affairs, that is to say, a good revenue ; and I do not believe that he cares much for being more absolute than he is " ;¹ but, as Louis marched from victory to victory and, with each success, showed less pacific intentions, a change also spread over the policy of Charles.

That he felt a strong, and possibly an affectionate, interest in his sister's son, William of Orange, is undoubted ; he did not view with any satisfaction the continued disaster which surrounded the prince ; moreover, the growth of the French naval power aroused his jealousy and created an alarm not hitherto experienced, that the complete subjugation of Flanders, the frontier of England as it was then called, might be the result, and France become mistress of a long northern coast line which would act as a constant menace to England.

¹ Dalrymple, p. 194.

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Consequently when Louis took Ypres and Ghent, thus completely throwing open the gate into the Low Countries, Charles prepared to act with decision. Soldiers were transported to Ostend, and, a supply of £1,000,000 being voted by the Commons, preparations were made for equipping a strong fleet and raising an army of 30,000 men. Then again the delay and procrastination of Parliament lost the opportunity.¹

The Congress at Nimuegen, assembled nearly three years before in 1675, still continued its discussions chiefly on matters of diplomatic etiquette and procedure, but the French plenipotentiaries, while occupying their colleagues with these matters, secretly made overtures to each separate Power. In every court of Europe the French King, by means of his competent and astute agents, caused his influence to be felt. With great ability and address, he endeavoured to hold that which he had won by dissolving the loose coalition of the allies, offering for this purpose separate proposals for peace to each of the continental States in turn. By consenting to yield up the important city of Maestricht and the district of Overmass to the United Provinces, and at the same time working upon their jealousy of the House of Orange, now strengthened by an alliance with the royal family of England, Louis provoked a strong opposition to William and induced the States-General to favourably consider the French proposals; managing, moreover, through them to persuade Spain also to acquiesce.²

In England Barillon and Ruvigny continued their usual practices "of nourishing the divisions in Parliament," with the result that so many difficulties delayed the collection of the funds voted in supply that the troops and crews clamoured for their pay, and the military preparations languished.³

The States-General, not too friendly disposed towards England, refused to ratify the offensive and defensive alliance

¹ Temple, Vol. II., p. 434.

² Mignet, Vol. IV., pp. 554 *et passim*.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 533.

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negotiated between Charles and William, and, in its place, somewhat coolly proposed a merely defensive alliance.

Burdened with a heavy debt, despairing of obtaining any help from his own countrymen, well aware also of the intrigues going on in other courts, small wonder that Charles desired to renew his amicable connection with France, the one Power which ministered to his own wants, and whose friendly relations conduced to the prosperity of the nation over which he ruled.

Early in the year Louis offered Charles pecuniary aid if he would desert his allies; now that the allies showed a strong disposition to leave him isolated, Charles endeavoured to renew the overtures. He caused the Lord Treasurer Danby to write a letter to Ralph Montague, the English ambassador at Paris, suggesting that the 600,000 livres per annum, then proffered by the French monarch, would now be most acceptable, and that a treaty might follow in which Charles would stipulate no longer to assist either the Dutch or the Spanish Government, would withdraw his troops from Flanders, leaving only a garrison of 3,000 men in Ostend, and would use his influence at the Congress of Nimuegen to obtain sanction to the terms proposed by France.

Danby, badly disposed towards France and very fearful, as well he might be, of his own position, resolutely refused to sign this letter. He had many enemies who openly clamoured for his removal, so, to allay his fears, Charles with his own hand added a postscript: "This letter is writ by my order.—C. R."¹

Barillon relates that both the King and the Duke of York showed considerable anxiety as to the answer they would receive; they were not long in doubt. Almost curtly Louis refused any dealings, declaring that matters had gone so far without the help of the English King that they might continue thus until finished in accordance with his own wishes.

Irritated and offended, Charles at once resumed his war-like preparations and made proposals to the representatives

¹ Historical MSS., "Eliot-Hodgkin," p. 194.

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of the Emperor, the Spanish Court and the Dutch States for a quadruple alliance with the object of forcing France to a general peace. In this conjunction the efficiency of the secret manœuvres of Louis became manifest. While the envoys of the Emperor and Spain warmly welcomed the project, the Dutch minister wavered and hung back, taking refuge in the subterfuge that he had received no definite instructions; indeed, so apparent were his tactics that Danby angrily told the Prince of Orange; "I do from my heart believe that our Parliament and your States contribute more to the service of the French King than the best army he has could do."¹

Parliament indeed did its best to assist its foreign paymasters; for months past the House of Commons had clamoured for war; now that its wishes seemed likely to be fulfilled it fell back into its old courses, and, instead of supporting the monarch in the foreign policy it originally urged upon him, spent its time in debates concerning the growth of popery and in addresses for the removal of evil councillors.²

This last resolution, an attack on Lauderdale, greatly disturbed and irritated the usually placable King, who, sternly telling the Commons that their address is "so extravagant I am not willing to speedily give it the answer it deserves," prorogued Parliament for ten days, at the same time informing Barillon that it was but the commencement of a longer prorogation. Charles then requested Ruvigny to lay before the King of France distinct propositions for a separate peace, which he declared that he himself would sign, "as there were none of his subjects sufficiently hardy to do so."³

It may justly be said that in acting thus, entering into an alliance against the expressed wish of his subjects, the King showed his contempt for the Constitution of his country; but it must be remembered that, up to that time, the manage-

¹ Danby, Letters.

² "Parliamentary History," pp. 970, 977.

³ Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 574.

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ment of foreign affairs lay entirely within the exclusive prerogative of the monarch. After the Restoration the Commons strove to obtain control over every administrative act of the Government, but, as their resolutions and remonstrances show, they acknowledged that the initiation of peace or war lay with the Crown, their contention consisting in a claim to be consulted before action might be taken.

It should not therefore be alleged that the king deserved censure because at that time he used his hereditary prerogative, providing that he conscientiously believed that the exercise of such power tended to the benefit of the nation he governed.

Rightly or wrongly, Charles certainly judged that the alliance with France conduced to the advantage of England, as he told Courtin, a year before : " At the bottom England enjoys a profound tranquillity and enriches herself while all the neighbouring States are drained and ruined by the war " : then he added : " That one day the English would thank him for having kept them by his prudence in so happy a state and so advantageous for their commerce." ¹ To those who doubt the unsupported statement of Charles, corroboration can be found in the indisputable fact that in 1674, " after a heavy frost when the waters were open, there sailed out of the harbour at Rotterdam 300 sail of English, Scotch and Irish ships, all at once, with an easterly wind " ²—an increase in the mercantile relations of Great Britain solely owing to the policy, both foreign and commercial, of Charles II. ; while the considerable accretion in the revenue of the customs bears eloquent testimony to the corresponding growth of trade and business.

That both King and Parliament received subsidies and bribes, possibly synonymous terms, from continental courts cannot be doubted ; the fact is true, and, being true, is disgraceful ; but the blame must be borne by both the guilty parties and not, as prejudiced writers endeavour to

¹ Dalrymple, p. 138.

² Macpherson, " Annals of Commerce."

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prove, by one alone. It is ridiculous to stigmatise a monarch for being in the pay of France when those politicians, who even now are proclaimed meritorious patriots, deliberately sold themselves to the declared enemies of their country, and took bribes from foreign sources for the purpose of hampering the Government in a policy which undoubtedly then commended itself to nine-tenths of the nation.

A very well-defined reason drove the King into this course ; he wanted money.

Partly owing to the financial condition of the people, partly to the inept measures of the administration, but largely to the policy of the House of Commons, the King never received adequate sums for the extraordinary outlay of the Government, although for the normal expenses of his establishment he may have received sufficient funds, and probably spent them extravagantly.

This financial pressure produced many difficulties, and at last swelled to such proportions that he complained to his French ally : " If I do not get assistance I shall have to endure a revolution such as destroyed the King, my father."¹

But the members of the House of Commons can plead no such excuse. They may have feared the spread of popery ; they may, and did, distrust the King both personally and politically : they passed into law harsh and drastic measures for the regulation of the one ; they initiated a system of controlling the other, by the appropriation of supplies, which exists to this day.

Neither reason can be taken as a valid excuse for the unpatriotic and self-seeking attitude they adopted at this crisis—that of endeavouring to drive the King and Government into war with France—while taking bribes from the very same Power as payment for hindering the exact policy they openly advocated ; indeed, a more unsavoury mixture of hypocrisy and corruption it would be hard to find.

The second visit of Ruvigny met with success ; after some demur on the part of Louis, a treaty was signed by Charles

¹ Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 571.

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himself and Barillon, on the part of the French King, which provided that, should the project of peace offered at Nimuegen not be accepted in two months by all the combatants, his Britannic Majesty engaged to remain in perfect neutrality and not to assist either directly or indirectly any of the allies. He also contracted to withdraw all troops except 3,000 men, left as a garrison at Ostend, and agreed to the terms proposed by his Most Christian Majesty.¹

Charles insisted on a provision by which William of Orange received back all his estates and the principality of Orange, already occupied by the French ; he further stipulated that, when the general peace was ratified, he himself should receive 6,000,000 livres tournois, but he resolutely refused to sign a proviso obliging him to prorogue his Parliament and disband his troops.²

If any excuse is needed for this treaty, again it can be found in the attitude and proceedings of Parliament. Charles met the Houses on the 23rd May and told them plainly : " When I met you last I asked your advice upon the great conjuncture abroad. What return you gentlemen of the House of Commons made me and whether it was suitable to the end I intended, which was the saving of Flanders, I leave it to yourself in cold blood to consider." ³

All things tended " violently towards a peace," but the maintenance of the naval and military forces of the kingdom would undoubtedly aid that desirable object, " to keep both ships and men supplies were necessary, and it depended on the House to give them."

Lord Chancellor Finch, who, according to Marvell, " as usual spoilt all that the King had said so well by striving to say it better," made a long oration in which he urged the House to " let the world now see that your zeal to preserve the Government is the same as it was when you were ready to die for it " ; and he concluded by entreating them " to embellish the history of Parliament by showing us the

¹ Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 578.

² Dalrymple, Barillon to Louis ; Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 578.

³ Journals of House of Commons ; " Parliamentary History," p. 977.

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healing virtue of this session." In reply to this moving appeal the Commons, after some discussion and an address to the King, resolved "that all the forces raised since September, 1677, should forthwith be paid off and disbanded," and then proceeded to various matters of small domestic detail.

On the 18th June Charles again came down in person to the House, and, in a dignified and conciliatory speech, pointed out that if the troops should be disbanded and consequently removed from Ostend, as the Spaniards in no way were in a condition to garrison the place, that important fortress and seaport would remain open for French occupation ; then he continued, that if he were to maintain the dignity of the Crown in a manner suitable to the grandeur of the nation, his annual income should be supplemented by at least £300,000 per annum.

To these remarks the Lower House vouchsafed no answer whatever, and again occupied their time with attacks, well founded no doubt, on the corruptibility of the members and on the honesty of the clerk, the whole scandalous proceeding being admirably summed up in the words of Reresby, himself a member of Parliament: "When they should have given money and made other preparations for the war, they were wasting their time in quarrelling at home with the Government and with each other."¹

At the very moment that all the world expected peace a new source of discord suddenly appeared.

In the terms of peace proposed by Louis he agreed to evacuate six of the border fortresses in Flanders and return them to Spain. Questioned by Doria, the Spanish plenipotentiary, on this point, the French representative at Nimuegen avowed that although it certainly was the intention of his master to hand these cities eventually to Spain, yet he proposed to retain possession of them until the Elector of Brandenburg and the Emperor should restore to the King of Sweden the places taken from him during the prolonged hostilities.²

¹ Reresby, p. 205.

² Temple, Vol. II., p. 440.

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This declaration destroyed all hopes of peace. Charles, in consonance with the rest of the allies, regarded the proviso as a direct attempt to evade the treaty: he at once resumed his warlike preparation; Lord Ossory led strong reinforcements to the English troops in Flanders, and a second corps made ready to cross the North Sea.

Such vigorous measures brought about the expected result; the French King signified his willingness to evacuate the specified places and the peace between France and Holland was signed.

That the action of Charles produced this result is clear; that he showed sincerity is demonstrated by the fact that through these measures he broke the secret treaty, executed by himself and Barillon only a few weeks before, and thus lost the subsidy which would have been of the greatest assistance to him in his financial straits. Owing to his decisive action the continuance of the devastating war became impossible, the peace signed between France and Holland acted as the precursor of a general pacification, and, although the treaty signed at Nimuegen satisfied no one, for ten years Europe felt the benefit of the cessation of hostilities, and the English nation reaped a full harvest of commercial and industrial prosperity.¹

¹ Mignet, Vol. IV., p. 623.

CHAPTER V.

CHARLES : THE CONSPIRACIES AND THE CRISIS.

OWING, perhaps, to the liberal tolerance of the Act of Indemnity and the merciful disposition of the King, for the first nineteen years of his reign, Charles enjoyed a remarkable freedom from plots and conspiracies against his life and person, with the exception of Venner's rebellion—the outbreak of a mere handful of fanatics which, meeting as it did with no popular support, was crushed without difficulty.

But as, year by year, those of his subjects who did not conform to the Church of England found themselves harassed and oppressed by legislative enactments threatening their liberty and their property, and as the fact became more and more evident that the legitimate heir to the throne held with tenacity and sincerity the doctrines of the Roman Church, a serious condition of unrest spread over the nation, providing a congenial soil for the propagation of dark intrigues and treasonable designs.

Thus the latter part of the reign presents a constant series of plots and counterplots, which, among other evils, engendered the growth of the trade of informer—despicable persons who gained a dishonourable living by bearing witness against those who from mischance or conscientious scruples failed to comply with the provisions of the harsh repressive statutes, chiefly concerned with religion, which Parliament passed from time to time.

As such informers could only live by testifying to breaches of the law, consequently it became very conducive to their interests that breaches of the law should increase and multiply as much as possible ; therefore these wretches with avidity availed themselves of the numerous opportunities for plying their trade afforded by the general

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ferment of public opinion and the widespread fear of popish intrigues.

In the autumn of 1678 the nation heard with horror and dismay of a terrible design to murder the King and place the whole government of the country in the hands of the papists. This Popish Plot, as it was called, burst like a thunderbolt upon the people, who, absolutely frantic with alarm, lent a ready ear to the most preposterous and contradictory reports.

The two persons mainly instrumental in starting this monstrous imposture were a certain Israel Tonge, at one time rector of Aston in Hertfordshire and previously of St. Mary Stayner, in the City of London, and Titus Oates, the son of an Anabaptist preacher, a scoundrel of undiluted depravity, but gifted with considerable ability and plausibility.

Tonge, who "had a restless and freakish head," appears to have been in all respects an inferior creature obsessed with an absorbing fear of Jesuit intrigue; "cynical and hirsute" are the odd attributes ascribed to him by Anthony à Wood; "a very mean divine, credulous and simple, but I looked on him as a sincere man," is Burnet's opinion. Tonge, as usual in this species of monomaniac, considered it his duty to disseminate his warnings as widely as possible, and so, at frequent periods, issued pamphlets detailing the latest intrigue of the Society of Jesus, which lucubrations, however, failed to receive much support from the public.¹

Oates, repulsive alike in body and mind, short in stature, bull-necked, with a huge chin, the mouth being placed in the centre of his face, his whole appearance presenting an aspect of sinister ugliness, from his earliest youth showed indications of intense wickedness; expelled from his school, driven from his college at Cambridge for misbehaviour, ejected from his cure of souls for perjury, dismissed from the Navy—in which for a time he acted as chaplain—for unnatural offences, he, after these mishaps, by his own confession endeavoured to

¹ Anthony à Wood, "Athenæ Oxonienses," Vol. II., p. 671; Burnet, Vol. I., p. 281.

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gain a living by the then lucrative trade of informer. For this purpose he entered into communication with the abhorred papists, and became an inmate of the Jesuit College at Valladolid. Here his stay was short, his scandalous conduct entailing a quick dismissal, and he returned to England, but, after a short sojourn in London, once more he crossed to France and contrived to gain admittance to the seminary at St. Omer, where again by his incorrigible ill-behaviour he incurred a sentence of expulsion, the authorities being heartily glad to get rid of his villainous presence.¹

Journeying a second time to England, driven by want and poverty, he joined forces with Tonge, and this combination of knave and fool proceeded to hatch out the popish plot.

As printed and published this monstrous concoction consisted of no less than eighty-one articles²—a mixed farrago of wild fiction interspersed with a few facts. The narrative stated that Corduba, the provincial of the Jesuit College in Madrid, after consultation with various fathers and priests in England, contrived a design to murder King Charles and establish the Roman Catholic faith in this country. To further this end "Father Le Shee," as Oates in his ignorance called Père la Chaise, confessor to Louis of France, provided £10,000 which he placed in the hands of Worsley, a London goldsmith, the conspirators being of the opinion that as "the King was altogether given up to his pleasures" (one of the few facts in the whole story), it would be easy to stab, shoot or poison him. Provision therefore was made for each mode of execution, Sir George Wakeman, physician to the Queen, being promised a sum of £10,000 or, if that bribe was insufficient, £15,000 to administer the fatal dose to "the Black Boy in Whitehall."

Oates also declared that, for the purpose of accomplishing these deeds, a meeting of the conspirators, all Jesuit fathers, took place at the White Horse Tavern in Fleet Street, on the 24th April; with malicious ingenuity he chose this date,

¹ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 282; North, "Examen," p. 221.

² Lords' Journals.

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as it had come to his knowledge that the triennial congregation of the Society of Jesus actually assembled on that day, not, as sworn by Oates, at a tavern, but in the Duke of York's house in St. James's, a fact which if known might have produced important results.

On the publication of these disclosures Oates received a summons to attend before the Privy Council, where, with great volubility and gusto, he narrated the whole story, embellished with many fresh efforts of his fertile imagination. His evidence ostensibly impressed the ministers ; the King, disbelieving, easily detected the imposture.¹

Oates swore that on a certain occasion Don John of Austria sent for him, granted an audience, and then made a promise to furnish funds for the murder plot, the procedure being hardly consonant with the strict etiquette of the Spanish court.

"What sort of a man is Don John ?" queried the King.

"Leane, tall and black," came the answer, at which Charles shrugged his shoulders and smiled, knowing full well that the person described, in reality, was short, fat, red and empty-headed. Again, when Oates related certain transactions which he alleged took place in the Jesuits' house close by the Louvre, Charles, impatient at the palpable lies, exclaimed : "Man, the Jesuits have no house within a mile of the Louvre."²

But patent as were the inaccuracies, absurdities, and contradictions of this monstrous fabrication, it suited the purpose of the Council to treat the matter seriously and issue warrants for the arrest of those unfortunates named by the accomplished perjurer. It is a matter of uncertainty as to whether persons in authority instigated Oates and his accomplices to bring these charges against the papists, or whether the whole story sprang from the necessities of a horde of vicious scoundrels. Probably Burnet, not wanting in acuteness, may be right when he expresses an opinion that "the many gross things in his narrative showed there was

¹ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 283.

² North, "Examen," p. 175 ; "James' Life," Vol. I., p. 520.

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no other hand than Oates or Tonge in the framing it"; yet, though the professional perjurer, in the hopes of gain, may have started the falsehood, it is beyond controversy that politicians, also for their own ends, quite as wicked and almost as ignoble, pressed and fostered the vile conception.¹

Charles, the destined victim, treated the whole matter with scepticism if not contempt, and betook himself to Newmarket, leaving injunctions with the Lord Treasurer to take no steps in the matter, not even to acquaint his brother with it.

But Danby regarded as a perfect godsend a subject which diverted the attention of the House of Commons from himself, so at the first opportunity acquainted Parliament with the whole affair, which, once ventilated, soon caused a national panic.²

One of the disadvantages inseparable from party politics already showed itself thus early—the system had existed barely two years—no statesman could be found sufficiently high-minded or self-sacrificing to withstand popular opinion; no leader of men dared risk his influence by endeavouring to withstand the tide of vulgar prejudice. Temple and Halifax, eminent politicians, who with all their limitations yet showed flashes of patriotism, when confronted with this unreasoning outburst of popular fury shed every vestige of their virility and sheepishly allowed themselves to be borne along in the rush. "Though it [the plot] was generally believed in both Houses, by city and country, by clergy and laity, yet when I talked with some of my friends in private, who ought best to know the bottom of it, they only concluded it was yet mysterious, that they could not say the King believed it, but however that the Parliament and nation were so generally and strongly possessed with it that it must of necessity be pursued as if it were true whether it was so or no"³—such is the determination of the cautious

¹ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 290.

² Rapin de Thoyras; North, "Examen," p. 175; "James' Life," p. 525.

³ Temple, Vol. II., p. 491.

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Temple and Halifax, almost in the same words, endorsed the dastardly policy.¹

If Danby by his chicanery started the parliamentary agitation, if Halifax and Temple by their selfish cowardice failed to stem the popular panic, no such negative accusation can be laid to the charge of Shaftesbury. "My Lord Treasurer fancied by help of the pretended conspiracy and crying out against popery he should pass for a pillar of the Church and ward off the blow which was falling on his shoulders, but my Lord Shaftesbury who found out his drift said, let the Treasurer cry, I will cry a note louder and soon take his place."² That the astute Shaftesbury publicly uttered this ingenuous remark is doubtful, but there is abundant evidence to show that, even if he did not engineer this opportunity of bringing about his great political objective, the exclusion of James from his brother's throne, yet he fostered the agitation and stimulated the popular alarm by all those means which his ability suggested or his organisation afforded, knowing that nothing he could devise would help his ulterior purpose better.

The words written in James' Memoirs exactly explain the situation: "For in the bottom it was not so much a popish conspiracy that frightened them as a popish successor . . . ; it was not so much love for their present sovereign as the fear of him that was to come after, so that under the motion of preserving one they were resolved if possible to prevent and ruin the other." It is certain that contemporary writers regarded Shaftesbury's action with strong suspicion. Charles himself often said that "he believed Shaftesbury had a hand in it"; and Bishop Prideaux roundly declares: "I mightily suspect that the old knave has been guilty of many subornations in the management of the popish plot,"—an opinion certainly not contradicted by the action of Shaftesbury himself, when he told Burnet, stung to action by the sight of a wretch like Carstairs swearing away the life

¹ Foxcroft, "Halifax," Vol. I., p. 133.

² "James' Life," p. 546.

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of an innocent man and anxious to make the informer's true character known : " Those who undermine the character of the witnesses should be looked upon as a public enemy." ¹

It is very doubtful, even with the adventitious aid of Shaftesbury's organisation, if any widespread belief in the monstrous story of Oates would have existed had not circumstances occurred, just at the critical moment, which turned that which might have been only popular curiosity into an outburst of national alarm.

Upon hearing the disclosures of the witnesses the Privy Council issued warrants for the seizure of certain people together with their papers. Among the individuals inculpatated was Edward Coleman, once secretary to James, afterwards transferred to the service of his wife, the Duchess of York. Coleman, a busy bustling shallow man, long regarded as a zealous proselytiser who took a part in political affairs more active than discreet, upon receiving a hint of the coming storm, possibly from James himself, hastened to destroy all papers which might contain matter dangerous or liable to misconstruction. If the unfortunate creature could have thoroughly effected his purpose he might perhaps have escaped, but the finding of certain letters containing that which was then regarded as highly incriminatory matter sealed his fate.

To us who live in a latitudinarian atmosphere it is evident that Coleman in no way committed any of the crimes laid to his charge, although he may have been a vain pretentious intriguer, possibly embarrassed in circumstances and so bent on getting money from any source which promised supply.

One of the letters seized formed part of a long correspondence with Père la Chaise, confessor to Louis, in which the writer asks for money to advance a scheme for the establishment of liberty of conscience, " success in which would give the Protestant religion the greatest blow that it had received from its birth." Coupled with this prophecy there occurred the following passage : " We have now a mighty work in our hands no less than the conversion of

¹ " James' Life," p. 528 ; Prideaux, Letters ; Burnet, Vol. I., p. 287—288.

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three kingdoms and by that the utter subduing of a pestilent heresy which had so long domineered over great part of the northern world.”¹ It is plain nowadays that, so far from referring to a plot for murdering princes, these sentences allude to a religious enterprise; the words of the Attorney-General, Sir William Jones, who prosecuted the doomed priest with a rancour and a prejudice, unfortunately only too characteristic of the British Bar in those days, gave the real interpretation to the aspirations of the accused, although indeed the advocate little meant to do so: “I doubt not in some measure this design has been continued ever since the Reformation by the Jesuits or some of their emissaries.”²

While these discoveries, innocent as they probably were of any treasonable or homicidal intent, agitated the public mind, an event happened which caused the nation absolutely to lose every vestige of self-control and become obsessed with a paroxysm of fear, which would have been ludicrous had not its effects been so lamentable.

Oates, on the inception of his plot, swore his depositions in ordinary course before a magistrate, Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey, an active capable official, knighted for his services during the plague and fire. Godfrey happened to be a friend of Coleman, and possibly gave him some warning of the impending accusation. On the 12th October, 1678, this magistrate left his house at an early hour and never again was seen alive. His absence from home being noticed, and a search instituted, his dead body, some five days after, was found in a ditch near Primrose or Greenberry Hill, as people called it in those days.

He had been murdered and the deed perpetrated in a manner and with such elaborate accessories as to suggest, to an unprejudiced observer, an intention on the part of those who committed the crime of casting suspicion upon others. Although the cause of death appeared to have been strangulation—a belt being tightly tied round the throat—yet the

¹ Coleman's Letters; Journals of Lords and Commons; "Parliamentary History," Appendix.

² "State Trials."

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victim's own sword had been thrust through the body after death, so the medical evidence pronounced, with such violence as to cause the point to project through the back. The hat and cane lay by the corpse ; the money and valuables remained untouched. As no signs of a struggle appeared anywhere in the vicinity the body must have been conveyed to the spot.

The murder in public estimation could only have been committed by the bloody papists, who intended, as this deed clearly indicated, a general massacre of the best and most distinguished in the nation. "We shall all rise in the morning with our throats cut," cried Sir Thomas Player, the Chamberlain of the City of London, and his fellow-citizens endorsed the gruesome though equivocal prediction. The militia was enrolled, the gates of the City barred, posts and chains stretched across the streets, and a condition of general panic prevailed.

A ludicrous picture has been drawn by Roger North of the silk armour "provided against the time that the Protestants were to be massacred, in which any man dressed up were as safe as a house, for it was impossible anyone should go to strike him for laughing, so ridiculous was the figure, as they say of hogs in armour." Thousands flocked to see Godfrey's body lying in state, and "at his funeral the crowd was prodigious and so heated that anything called papist, were it a cat or a dog, had probably gone to pieces in a moment ; everyone feared the popish knife at his throat, and at the sermon besides the preacher two thumping divines stood upright in the pulpit to guard him from being killed while preaching from the papists."¹

The abject terror engendered by these precautions is shown in a letter written by Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, to the King himself concerning certain matters connected with the plot, in which the reverend prelate begs that his letters may be sent back immediately, and that the King "will not trust his own pockets with his letter, but send it

¹ "Examen," pp. 204, 205.

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back to me speedily and secretly ; I shall not eat or sleep in quiet until I have them.”¹

The mystery of Godfrey's death still remains unsolved ; the theory of suicide, advanced by Lingard on the authority of James' Memoirs, is untenable, as likewise is the idea that the deceased magistrate met his death at the hands of those wandering and violent characters whose enmity his activity in repressing crime may have aroused.

Public opinion at the time of course ascribed the murder to the papists, an opinion endorsed by Mr. Pollock, who believes in the plot in its entirety and, though doubting the *bona fides* of some of the witnesses, contends that all circumstantial evidence points to the conclusion that Godfrey met his death at the hands of the Jesuits, in order to destroy the only man, outside the order, acquainted with the fact that the heir apparent to the throne permitted a consultation of the proscribed and detested society to meet in his own palace at St. James's.² Against this may be urged that the depositions in the possession of Godfrey were already within the knowledge of the Privy Council, and that therefore to commit the deed was not only unnecessary, but the crime would inevitably increase the prevalent feeling against the Roman Catholics, would in no way help the persecuted sect and, in short, was both useless and a blunder certain to produce immediate and calamitous results.

On the other hand, it is clear that extraneous means were employed to increase and nurture the popular excitement. The elaborate arrangements of Godfrey's funeral show the practised hand of an efficient organiser ; his death came as a veritable godsend to Oates and his fellow-perjurers, who from that moment put forward the wildest fiction, which the public swallowed with avidity. It has been argued, against any theory which throws the *onus* of this crime on the Protestants, that neither Oates nor his accomplices possessed any means of committing such a murder ; that may be so, but Shaftesbury, who undoubtedly used the plot for his own

¹ Somers' Tracts.

² "Popish Plot," Pollock.

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political ends and had no hesitation in allowing innocent men to die in torture for offences which he must have known they never committed, would have found no difficulty in finding an instrument among his satellites and "brisk boys"—some disreputable character, some discharged soldier, as Prance or Bedloe—to perform a deed from which, for the time being, he reaped such important advantage.

From the moment that the public learnt the details of Godfrey's death all opposition to the plot became a crime against the nation. Those who doubted that the papists deserved short and sharp shrift were deemed worthy of a similar fate themselves; the people howled for the blood of innocent and respectable citizens guilty of nothing except the unforgivable sin of being members of the Roman Catholic Church. It would indeed be a matter of sorrowing wonder that this English people, a sober nation, as Charles I. called them, should have fallen a prey to such unreasoning frenzy, if it were not that, even now in the lax and tolerant days of the twentieth century, there still exists in the minds of some decent people such a haunting fear of papal aggression that, when returning from their place of worship on a Sunday, full of evangelical zeal, the smell of their domestic mutton invariably induces remembrance of the reek of the fires in Smithfield and horrific visions of the Marian persecutions.

If any evidence is necessary to show how Shaftesbury's engineering affected the plot it can be found in the attitude adopted by Oates of adding step by step to his evidence. Originally his declaration took the form of revealing a design to murder the King, the Duke of York, if he proved recalcitrant, the Duke of Ormonde and many others of the Protestant nobility; at first he only inculpated Roman priests and some few individuals more or less obscure, but eventually he made a direct accusation against the Queen herself, whom he declared to be an accessory to the scheme for murdering her husband.

That this shaft came from Shaftesbury's quiver is highly probable, his latest move in the policy of James's exclusion taking the shape of an agitation to induce the King to divorce

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the Queen, remarry and raise up a Protestant heir to the throne ; but here, as on more than one other occasion, those who relied on the careless indolence of Charles were disagreeably surprised.¹

This attack on his ill-used consort aroused the manliness in his nature. "They think I have a mind for a new wife, but for all that I will not see an innocent woman abused,"² he exclaimed ; and no efforts, direct or indirect, caused him to alter his opinion. The Queen, poor creature, seeing the cruelties practised on her co-religionists and finding herself the object of suspicion and dislike, clung to her husband as her legitimate protector ; she accompanied him on his journeys feeling "that she can be nowhere safe but where the King is present to protect her."³

On the first hint of Oates's attack on the Queen Charles told Burnet he would "give him line enough," evidently implying his desire for the natural sequence of such procedure, and when the accusation took concrete shape he issued an order confining Oates to his room, seizing his papers and diminishing his pay.⁴ On the solicitation of the Council the King, perforce, withdrew the restriction, but from the commencement he doubted the authenticity of the whole story, and it was against his express commands that Danby brought the subject before the Houses of Parliament. As soon, however, as the Commons proceeded to move in the matter, then, according to his considered policy, he allowed them to take their course without interference. "I have been informed of a design against my person by the Jesuits of which I shall forbear an opinion lest I may seem to say too much or too little, but I will leave the matter to the law,"⁵

How bloodily that law was administered is now a matter of history. On the 27th November Coleman appeared before the King's Bench on a charge of high treason ; the Commons offered him a full pardon if he would make a complete dis-

¹ "James' Life," p. 528.

² Ralph's "History."

³ Prideaux Letters, p. 82.

⁴ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 288 ; Ralph's "History."

⁵ "Parliamentary History," p. 1016.

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covery of his guilt, by which was meant give testimony, true or false, against others ; but the hopeless wretch could only pathetically reply that he " was very sensible of the miserableness of his condition, for he knew that there was enough already known to take away his life and that he did not know enough to save it." ¹

Other priests, solely because they were priests, and Langhorne, a well-known and respected lawyer, next appeared before the courts ; but no jury dared, or for a matter of fact wished, to acquit them, and every one of the unfortunate and perfectly innocent men suffered death.

Charles felt the greatest concern about these sentences ; his trouble of mind and uneasiness is more than once recorded by those who lived in his company. " The same day the priests were condemned which the King was not well pleased with, but after he had had a little advice he kept it pretty well to himself." Henry Sidney, no warm friend to Charles, relates this, and some few weeks later again writes : " The same day the business at the Council was to reprieve Langhorne, wherein the King took great pains, which troubled all those that were concerned for him. The Privy Seal doth ever plead for the Catholics ; Lord Shaftesbury is most violent against them." ²

With the full force of popular opinion, ignorant and prejudiced, demanding blood, and with the most potent of his councillors either paralysed by caution (Temple and Halifax for instance) or furious for persecution (such as Shaftesbury), Charles's merciful instincts had few opportunities of display. That he suffered in mind and body is plain. " Let the blood lie on those who condemned them, for God knows I sign with tears in my eyes," he sorrowfully exclaimed to Lord Aylesbury when the death warrants were laid before him.³ He spent much of his time alone, silent and grave, retired from his court, and showed in many ways his unhappiness at his impotence to spare the lives of innocent men.

¹ " Parliamentary History," p. 1026.

² Sidney Diary, pp. 1, 7, 17.

³ Aylesbury Memoirs, p. 95.

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Those who accuse him of deserting the unfortunate victims of the plot do him a distinct injustice.

His declaration of leaving the inquiry to the law probably proceeded from a knowledge that he could more easily influence the judges than the Houses of Parliament; and he gave express injunction to Danby not to bring the matter before the Commons, which injunction, for his own ends, the minister disobeyed.¹ The excited condition of the whole country, the consensus of opinion being violently against the miserable prisoners, neutralised for a time at least the royal influence with the judges—men like Scroggs, who, frightened for their own skins, treated the wretches on their trial with violence and brutality.

Charles's position bristled with difficulties. The great object of his life, the abiding principle which he professed from the earliest days, the maintenance of the throne and its legitimate succession, lay in immediate peril. A party in the State existed which, while openly attacking his brother, covertly plotted against himself and his throne also.

From these dangers he extricated himself with consummate address and ability, but, if, by a stretch of his royal prerogative, he had reprieved the condemned papists, and thus openly opposed himself to the almost universal prejudices of his subjects, he could hardly have saved the innocent lives which, to a certainty, would still have fallen victims to the popular frenzy, and he might have brought destruction upon himself, his brother, and the kingly office to which he tenaciously held.

If Danby hoped, by disobeying his royal master and bringing the question of the plot before Parliament, to disarm the hostility of the Commons to himself and his policy he was woefully disappointed. With all his talents—and he proved, in many respects, the most able minister who at any time served Charles—he showed a curious aptitude for provoking personal dislike: “’Tis wonderful to see how bold Treasurer is in making enemies”; and he so openly

¹ Rapin; North; James (*vide ante*).

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used his opportunities, neither few nor infrequent, to enrich himself and his family that the habit became the subject of constant scandal. "It is wonderful to see his good fortune in the marrying of his children and setting his family in order," repeats one court gossip, who soon after adds: "Treasurer lays about him and provides for his family, so that, if ever he comes to be out with the King, his enemies will maul him."¹

And maul him they did, though they bided their time to do it.

On the 4th November Lord Russell brought forward an address to remove the Duke of York from attendance on the King's person or counsels; in the debate which followed the first symptoms of the coming storm were heard when Mr. Sacheverell, who gave the information that "he had read a little of the law," wished to ascertain whether "the King and Parliament may not dispose of the succession to the Crown," and whether it be not "præmunire to say the contrary."²

A Bill had already passed the Commons which practically excluded all Roman Catholics from a seat in Parliament; the Lords with some demur—for such an enactment struck at the root of an hereditary peerage—gave their consent to the measure, which prevented any peer who might be a member of the Roman Church from taking his seat in the Upper House, and this disability continued until the repeal of the Act in 1829. Although the House of Lords assented to this law, by a special clause they exempted the Duke of York from its operation, an exception which caused great indignation in the Commons, who, however, by a majority of two concurred in the amendment.³

But this very privilege excited the jealousy of the Opposition, and from the passing of the Act dates the organised attempt to exclude James from succession to the throne.

Saturated with hatred of popery the Commons seized upon

¹ *Essex*, pp. 258, 279.

² "Parliamentary History," p. 1034.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 1045; Burnet, Vol. I., p. 289.

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any opportunity which might arise for showing their antagonism to the court. They heard that certain commissions given to Roman Catholics, who, having taken the required oaths, were in all respects legally entitled to hold such warrants, had been signed by Sir Joseph Williamson, the Secretary of State, and forthwith for doing this duty they sent him to the Tower. Charles lost no time in dealing with these gentry; he summoned the members next day to attend him at the Banqueting House, and then succinctly and almost contemptuously told them "that though they had committed his servant without acquainting him, yet he intended to deal more fairly with them and acquaint them with his intention to release his secretary," which accordingly he did that very day.¹

Thwarted in their attempt on one minister the followers of Shaftesbury turned their attack on another. Supported by the King's favour and his own marked abilities Danby managed to maintain himself in his high office and seemed to be establishing more firmly his influence, when, just at the moment he appeared to have surmounted his troubles, his enemies by a blow from a most unexpected quarter were enabled to complete his downfall.

Louis of France always attributed the marriage of William of Orange and Mary to the efforts of Danby, and in common with his ambassador, Barillon, regarded the English statesman as a convinced opponent to the French alliance. Being foiled in all efforts to win, by bribery, sufficient votes to defeat the minister in Parliament, Louis determined to ruin him by other means.

For this purpose he used, as a fitting instrument, Ralph Montague, the English envoy at the Louvre, a corrupt, worthless man already in receipt of French pay and hungry for more: "*Car dans ce monde on ne fait rien pour rien*";² his own words adequately exhibit his character. Placing in Montague's hands the secret correspondence which had passed between Danby and the French Court some six

¹ "Parliamentary History," p. 1038.

² Danby's Letters, p. 4.

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months previously, Louis urged him to obtain a seat in Parliament, so as to be in a position to contrive the ruin of the Lord Treasurer.¹ Montague, having made his terms,² without seeking permission from his own sovereign got elected for Northampton, largely through the exertions of Harbord, a pronounced partisan of Shaftesbury, and sailed immediately for England.

The Treasurer possessed many means of obtaining secret information: warned of the impending attack, he caused Montague's papers to be seized on a charge, at that time one of extreme significance, of holding private conference with the Papal Nuncio, and trusted by these timely measures to have frustrated the designs of his enemies by securing any documents which might be incriminating to himself in the eyes of Parliament.³

He failed. "Montague understood the arts of a court too well to be easily caught"; the special letters on which he relied for the success of his plan were studiously concealed and separated from the rest of his papers, so, when the matter came before the House of Commons, rising in his place he complained that the seizure of his cabinets was effected only for the purpose of obtaining possession of some letters of consequence concerning the designs of a great minister of state.⁴ Upon this the House ordered certain members—all, as a fact, cognisant of Montague's disclosures—to fetch this correspondence, which being done, the box containing it was broken by a smith, the key having been taken to Whitehall. Mr. Speaker, then, read two letters from the Treasurer to the French King, one dated the 16th January, 1678, the other the 25th March, the latter being the identical epistle on which, at Danby's urgent request, Charles had written "This letter is writ by my order. C.R.," and which contained an application for £300,000 for three years, "because it will be two or three years before the King can hope to find his Parliament in a humour to give him supplies."

¹ Rapin de Thoyras.

² Dalrymple, p. 251.

³ "James' Life," p. 532

⁴ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 291.

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On the recital of this epistle the House broke into paroxysms of wrath and mysterious anxiety, Harbord protesting that he was afraid that the King's person was in danger from the subtle machination of some person unnamed, who, so it was hinted, had possession of poisons both liquid and in powder, which, apparently, could be used either to destroy the monarch or the witnesses who testified to the unnamed person's iniquity.¹ Having thus excited the fears of the assembly, already almost hysterical over the popish plot, no further reference to poisons seemed necessary, and Montague then hastened to bring a definite and heavy charge. He alleged that he himself, from his own ambassadorial experience, could bear witness that, but for Danby's exorbitant demands, better terms of peace could have been extracted from the French King; for that monarch complained, "I find my Lord Treasurer has so much the sweet of being Treasurer of England that he would be Treasurer of France as well," and therefore, greatly irritated at the unreasonable claims on his purse, refused any further negotiation.

Upon this evidence, with considerable vehemence, by 179 to 116 votes the House resolved to impeach the Lord Treasurer.

In the account of these proceedings the prominent feature which especially impresses the reader is the unspeakable baseness of the chief actors.

The policy which Charles pursued in soliciting money from Louis may be open to great animadversion as devoid of national pride; the conduct of the Treasurer, Danby, may equally be censured as unduly obsequious and unpatriotic; but what can be said of Montague and Harbord, the prime movers in the impeachment!

Montague, as envoy at Paris, spared no pains to bring about the very projects he afterwards condemned; "I am sorry so great a minister has brought so great a guilt upon himself," were the words he uttered in the House of Commons, knowing that he himself had fixed the price of the

¹ "Parliamentary History," pp. 1060 *et passim*.

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treachery he was then committing at the "sum of 100,000 crowns in hand or an annuity of 40,000 livres upon the Hotel de Ville, or a pension of 50,000 livres during his life, and this in case only that the accusation succeeds and the Treasurer is removed from court in six months."¹ A despicable man in every action of his life, his conduct in this instance is but a sample of his whole career.

Harbord, also, at the moment that he talked about poisons and the "taking off" of witnesses with £300, professing to be shocked at a minister squandering money in secret service, was the hero of the following entry in Barillon's accounts: "December 22nd, to the Sieur Harbord, 500 guineas, which makes £543 15s. sterling."

In so vile a light do all the accusers in these proceedings appear, that, if the facts were known to Charles—and there is reason to believe that he had a shrewd suspicion of the state of affairs—it goes far to justify the manner in which he habitually treated his House of Commons.

When the impeachment of Danby came before the Lords, in a speech of great ability, skill and logical reasoning, he defended himself so well that the Upper House refused to continue the prosecution,² the debate winding up with an astounding speech from the Earl of Carnarvon, whom Buckingham, in his usual mad humour, had well primed with flattery and wine, and then loosed upon the amazed assembly: "My Lords, I understand but little of Latin but a good deal of English, and not a little English history, from which I have learnt the mischief of such kind of prosecution as these and the ill fate of the prosecution. I could bring many instances and those very antient, but I will go no further than the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign, at which time the Earl of Essex was run down by Sir Walter Rawleigh. My Lord Bacon ran down Sir Walter Rawleigh and your lordships know what became of Lord Bacon. The Duke of Buckingham ran down my Lord Bacon and your Lordships know what became of the Duke of Buckingham." After repeating

¹ Dalrymple, Barillon to Louis, 24th October, 1678.

² Lords' Journals, p. 540.

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exactly the same formula in the cases of the Earl of Strafford, Sir Harry Vane and Lord Chancellor Hyde, the unique oration concluded by an impressive declaration: "Sir Thomas Osborne, now Lord Danby, ran down Chancellor Hyde, but what will become of the Earl of Danby? Your lordships best can tell, but let me see the man that dare run the Earl of Danby down and we shall see what will become of him"—at which burst of eloquence the Duke of Buckingham cried out, "The man is inspired and claret has done the work."¹

To prevent further proceedings against his minister the King, although by so doing he lost a much needed supply of £600,000, on the 30th December prorogued, and a few weeks afterwards dissolved, this so-called Long Parliament, the first of his reign, notorious alike for its duration and its corruption.²

The Duke of York and the Treasurer, though from diverse motives, combined in advising this course. According to Burnet, at that time much in his confidence, James, though he scarcely hoped that a new Parliament would be more tolerant toward the Roman Catholics, yet trusted that its attacks on the Royal authority would be such as, at least, to incur the King's resentment, for though Charles might be disposed to overlook incursions on his prerogative from an assembly to which he owed his restoration to his father's throne, the annoyance might prove unbearable from a Legislature to which he was in no way indebted.³

On the other hand there is reason to believe that Danby approached the leaders of the Opposition with two propositions—an offer of a dissolution, vehemently desired by them, and a promise of his own voluntary withdrawal from office—providing that they on their part consented to drop the impeachment against him. Among other reasons which rendered some compromise necessary, pay for the troops must be obtained, for Louis had evaded a request from Charles for

¹ "Parliamentary History," p. 1073.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1074.

³ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 294; Hatton, Vol. I., p. 129.

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a further subsidy of £400,000, and with the loss of supply the treasury lay positively empty ; therefore, as a strong desire for a dissolution existed in the ranks of the Opposition, in the hopes of diminishing some portion of their antagonisms and thus obtaining money, Charles issued his proclamation.¹

The election which ensued, practically the first election fought on party lines in England, showed in its salient features a marked resemblance to many another such contest fought since.

Generous gifts of money—the Bedfordshire election cost £6,000—and unlimited supplies of drink induced the intelligent electors to support the Popular party or Patriots. Macaulay relates : “ New tactics were pursued ; it was remarked by the pamphleteers of that time as something extraordinary that horses were hired at a great charge for the conveyance of voters ; the practice of splitting freeholds for the purpose of multiplying votes dates from this memorable struggle.”² A distinct aptitude, redolent of to-day, was also shown in reconciling absurdities so as to evolve a popular cry : The Plot ! Who ever does not oppose the plot is an enemy to the King, for the plotters and the papists mean to kill the King ; the Popular party intends to put down the plot and the papists. Vote for the Popular party and support the King ! The King supports the plot, the King’s brother is a papist. Vote for the Popular party, which will put down both ! Such may fairly be said to epitomise the arguments of the Opposition.

The device for a time proved successful ; the supporters of the court when numbered in Parliament counted barely a tenth of their previous strength, and Shaftesbury remained master of the situation.

Thus ended the first Parliament of the Restoration after a career of eighteen years ; at first the enthusiastic and almost servile instrument of the royal will, it changed into being the captious and corrupt opponent of the royal prerogative. For that complete reversal Charles is not

¹ Christie, “ Shaftesbury,” Vol. II., p. 305 ; Dalrymple, p. 289.

² Macaulay, Vol. I., p. 246.

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altogether to blame ; indeed, it is remarkable how he continued to maintain his great personal popularity and to hold a firm place in the affections of his people, although, by now, his evident frailty of moral character must have become well known to all his subjects.

The origin of the alteration in the attitude of the Commons dates from the time when it became notorious that the heir to the throne professed the doctrines of Roman Catholicism. Charles may or may not have been a papist at heart—he always professed allegiance to the English Church ; and although he tried to secure tolerance for the Roman Catholics, yet he never attempted to subvert the privileges of the Establishment. James, on the other hand, lost no opportunity of displaying the thoroughness of his conversion, and resisted all attempts to engage him even in a controversy concerning his change of faith, much less to reconsider his decision.

The King made many attempts to reconcile, at least outwardly, the religious views of his heir and those of the English Church, but finding all efforts futile, and the result of the election bringing home to him a knowledge of the deep distrust with which the people regarded his brother's popish convictions, he came to the conclusion that the only means by which serious danger to the Crown and the succession could be averted would be for the Duke of York to absent himself for a while from the court and the kingdom.¹

James, after some demur, assented, the completeness of the electoral defeat possibly being evident even to his obdurate understanding ; also, Lord Strafford, Lord Petre and their companions, prisoners in the Tower for the popish plot, fearful for their lives, pressed on him their solicitations ; but before consenting to his own banishment he insisted on three conditions—that the King should once more definitely deny the legitimacy of Monmouth ; should give a strict undertaking to maintain the legitimate right to the throne, and should, under his own hand, express in writing his royal desire for his brother's departure from the kingdom.

¹ "James' Life," pp. 537 *et passim*.

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To these stipulations Charles at once assented and wrote an affectionate manly letter, in many respects reminiscent of the epistles he wrote to his "deare, deare sister," Henriette :

" I have already given you my reasons at large why I think it fitt you should absent from me for some time beyond the seas ; as I am truly sorry for the occasion, so you may be sure I shall never desire it longer than it will be absolutely necessary both for your good and my service ; You may easily believe with what trouble I writ this to you, there being nothing I am more sencible of, than the constant kindness you have ever had for me, and I hope you are so just to me as to be assured that no absence, no anything els, can ever change me from being truly and kindly yours,

" C. R." ¹

Two days before the opening of Parliament James and his wife left England for the Hague, thence journeying to Brussels. It is probable that Danby also, between whom and James no love was lost, urged the King to send his brother away ; but if he thought that by so doing the enmity of Parliament would be mitigated he soon found himself undeceived.

The new session opened inauspiciously with an unfortunate and needless dispute about the election of the Speaker.

Danby—or his wife, always an evil influence with him—being most unfriendly to Edward Seymour, designated by the House to fill the chair, persuaded Charles to refuse his assent to the nomination on the ground that, as Seymour held the rank of Privy Councillor, he was disqualified from presiding over the Commons. A serious feud might have arisen, but all parties being anxious to avoid strife, peaceful counsels prevailed, and Serjeant Gregory, a candidate agreeable alike to court and Commons, obtained a unanimous election. But the temper displayed by the House did not augur well for the future and the business to which it applied itself, the prosecution of the unfortunate noblemen, prisoners

¹ "James' Life," p. 541.

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in the Tower, accused of complicity with the popish plot, soon gave way to a matter of even more unfriendly nature—a resolution calling on the House of Lords to continue the impeachment of the Lord Treasurer.¹

In answer to these attacks Charles, according to custom, granted Danby a full pardon for all acts done in his capacity of minister, but “on reading this report the House fell into a violent heat and debate,” one member, Mr. Powle, asseverating that, in addition to many crimes and misdemeanours, “to the earl the nation owes the dangers and fears of the French King against us.”

In the face of this expressed horror of French influence it is interesting to know from the despatches of Barillon, the ambassador of the said French King, that Mr. Powle was one of the four members who, to quote the graphic phrase, “touched what was promised them,” an additional entry specifying “To the *Sieur Powle*, 500 guineas, which makes £543 15s. sterling.”²

In dealing with the Commons, at this time, Danby seems to have lost the art of management, so strongly shown in his past conduct when members of Parliament, as he said, clustered round him “like jackdaws asking for cheese.” Possibly he relied on the alleged agreement with Lord Holles and the Opposition leaders, for, while in pursuance of his understanding with them he announced his retirement from office, he persuaded the King to confer on him the rank of a marquis.

The bestowal of this ill-timed honour afforded an excellent opportunity for a renewed attack on the exercise of the royal prerogative and the minister who benefited by it, Shaftesbury leading off with a violent philippic.

Charles attended the sitting of the Lords, standing, as was his wont, with his back to the fire, listening, generally with a smile of amused contempt, to the debates; but when Halifax, pretending to oppose Shaftesbury’s motion, said with trenchant satire, “His lordship must have been imposed

¹ “Parliamentary History,” pp. 1092 *et passim*; Burnet, Vol. I., p. 300.

² Dalrymple, Barillon to Louis, p. 338.

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on by a flamm report for it was impossible to imagine that the King could ever be prevailed upon to do an act so ungrateful to his people," Charles, roused out of his usual placidity, bitterly exclaimed, "My God, how am I abused and I must bear it and say nothing!"¹

This attack in the Lords, followed by a determined resolution in the Commons, decided Danby's fate; the King hearing that a warrant would be issued, sent a message by Lord Plymouth, one of his natural sons, to the minister bidding him immediately take shelter in Whitehall. Danby obeyed, remaining under the shelter of the royal roof until the Commons passed a bill of attainder, when, in order to save his family from the threatened ruin, he surrendered to the Usher of the Black Rod, was committed to the Tower, and remained a prisoner for five years, although, if current reports are to be believed, "he seemed to be very little concerned," his incarceration permitting many and constant visits from his friends and frequent communication on affairs of State with his monarch.²

To the King, however, the situation appeared gloomy enough. Danby practically monopolised all the functions of the ministry; "he was not only Treasurer, but Prime Minister also, not only kept the purse, but was the first and greatest confidant of State."³ On his dismissal Charles put the Treasury in commission, appointing Essex, Hyde, and Godolphin, the first named as Chief Commissioner, but none of the three could in any way supply the place of the disgraced statesman in the King's counsels. Fear and dread of coming evils filled the hearts of all connected with the court, the Duchess of Portsmouth and the Earl of Sunderland, lately appointed a Secretary of State, being especially apprehensive; they thought themselves in danger from the Popular party, so sedulously urged the King to come to terms with the Opposition and especially to placate the Earl of Shaftesbury.⁴

¹ Hatton, Vol. I., p. 184.

² Reresby, p. 222; Ranke, p. 100.

³ Reresby, p. 221.

⁴ Temple, Vol. II., p. 493; Christie, "Shaftesbury," Vol. II., p. 320.

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No help could be obtained from the Privy Council (according to Burnet, filled with Danby's creatures), so to avoid, at least for a time, having recourse to the leader of the extreme section Charles turned to the moderate men, who though unfriendly to his French policy, yet in other respects showed no determined hostility to his measures. Chief among these was Sir William Temple, the author of the Triple Alliance, a cautious diplomatic statesman, respected by the chiefs of the Opposition, yet not bound by any ties to any party.

Temple recommended a curious experiment which the King in his dilemma accepted, although there is ample reason to believe that Charles did not entertain a high opinion of the proposed solution of his difficulties.

The scheme attributed to Temple, and in which assuredly he took a great share, consisted in the creation of an entirely new Privy Council, somewhat reduced in numbers and divided into two parts—the ministers of the King, and a certain proportion of independent members who would serve both as a check upon the Government and as a buffer between the ministry and the Parliament. If the scheme came into operation, the King would act solely on the advice of the Council, who would decide the mode and method of all administrative acts, the inner committees, hitherto an integral part of the Government, being now dissolved.

Temple hoped by these means "to break the growth of the ministry, though I saw no men I could desire to fix in it with any satisfaction or advantage to the King or his service. On the other side I observed the Parliament to grow every day more violent, upon the support they received from the humours raised by the plot, and the incentives given them by the ambitions of persons playing that game"—the last remark being a thrust at Shaftesbury, of whom Temple always retained a profound distrust.¹

In present parlance the scheme really resolved itself into a change of Government, the ministers being more or less in touch with the House of Commons. By a proviso

¹ Temple, Vol. II., p. 493.

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curiously indicative of the spirit of the age, the qualification for this new constitutional body chiefly consisted in "personal riches," which in revenues "of land or offices was found to amount to about £300,000 a year, whereas those of a House of Commons are seldom found to exceed £400,000, and at the worst such a Council might out of their own stock, at a pinch, furnish the King so far as to relieve some great necessity of the Crown."

Temple produced his constitutional bantling with much complacency, and, judging from his own account, those with whom he consulted "all received it with equal amazement and pleasure; my Lord Chancellor said it looked like a thing from heaven fallen into his Majesty's breast; Lord Essex that it would leave the Parliament and nation in the same disposition to the King which he found at his coming in, and Lord Sunderland approved it as much as any."¹

As the plan promised to assist all the above statesmen in retaining their offices, at least for a time, their amazement and pleasure can be understood, but Charles suffered himself to be deluded by no such opinions. "They are about to put a lot of men about me, but they shall know nothing,"² said he to Aylesbury, and showed by his attitude that he believed Temple's conception to be useless and unworkable. So, in fact, it proved, the Council being at once too large for business and too small to represent in any degree the numerous diversities of existent opinion. Within a very short period it was found necessary to reinstate the committees; within a scarcely longer time the old divisions and old differences arose.

The first trouble began about the inclusion of certain distinguished personages in the Council. Temple proposed Lord Halifax, "whom indeed the King kicked at," remembering the direct personal attack made by the noble lord in the debate on the Danby marquissate; but on Temple's earnest entreaties Charles consented, and then, with his usual clear-sightedness, observed: "There was another who

¹ Temple, Vol. II., p. 495.

² Aylesbury Memoirs, p. 36.

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if he were left out might do as much mischief as any," and he named Lord Shaftesbury.¹

In this nomination Charles undoubtedly pursued a policy which marked his conduct from the beginning of his difficulties until the moment he emerged from his troubles victorious and supreme.

He knew that the majority of these statesmen were united solely in opposition to himself and his brother; at heart they equally distrusted each other and only required opportunity to develop the latent antagonism. At this time, as afterwards, he played one party against the other with consummate skill, so that, though both were opposed to his policy, both were compelled to avail themselves of his support to maintain their own position against those of their colleagues, who, they knew on occasion, would oust them from public employment.

Within a week of the completion of the Council the scheme broke down in one most important particular, the Committee of Foreign Affairs, or practically the Cabinet, as it would be called to-day, being reinstated. It consisted of Shaftesbury (whom Charles appointed President with a salary of £4,000 per annum), Lords Halifax, Essex and Sunderland, Sir William Temple, Lord Chancellor Finch, Henry Coventry (the Secretary of State) and Lord Arlington, "now grown out of all credit and confidence of the King."²

It is obvious that such an inner circle as this, composed of men of weight and experience, would exercise more influence over the government of the country than a Council of thirty-three members, many of whom were destitute of knowledge of practical administration; but even this interior body found itself divided into factions, and, before many days elapsed, the Cabinet itself separated into two distinct divisions—the one led by Shaftesbury, the other consisting of Halifax, Essex, and Sunderland, known as the "Triumvirate."

When the House met on the 21st April the King announced

¹ Temple, Vol. II., p. 495.

² Christie, "Shaftesbury," Vol. II., p. 328.

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to them the inauguration of the new Council, and informed the Commons that he could not make so great a change without consulting them. The Commons heard the announcement with most frigid coldness ; they voted no address in reply, but having already supplied sufficient funds, strictly appropriated to the purpose of disbanding and paying off the Army, proceeded to debate a resolution concerning the preservation of the King's person and the Established Church, which finally resolved itself into a direct attack on the Duke of York.¹

Lord Russell presented this resolution to the Council, and the long debate necessitated by it accentuated the divisions already existing in that body. Temple and Lord Shaftesbury both opposed any restrictions upon the Duke of York, should he succeed to his brother's throne—Temple because he objected to shackle the Crown, Shaftesbury on the ground that no restrictions would bind James, should he find himself *de facto* King of England.

This last argument found great support among Shaftesbury's followers in the Commons. On the 11th May the debate began on the reply of the King to the previous resolution of the House. Now plainly and with determination the policy of excluding James from the succession found open advocates. "If you will have the Duke of York come to the throne as other kings do, speake plain English," vociferated Bennett, secretary to Lord Shaftesbury. "If you intend that, I will become a papist," he added ; and the same feeling showed itself in nearly every speech of the Opposition, culminating in a motion, carried by a majority of 79, that "the said Duke of York be incapable of inheriting the Crown of England, Scotland and Ireland ; in case His Majesty should happen to die or resign his dominions, they should devolve to the person next in succession, in the same manner as if the duke were dead ; and that if the duke himself should perform any act of sovereignty or royalty he should be guilty of high treason and punishable as such." ²

¹ "Parliamentary History," p. 1125 ; Temple, Vol. II., p. 497.

² "Parliamentary History," pp. 1131—1136 ; Anchitel Grey, "Debates."

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A proposal of this nature, coupled with the absolute denial of the royal right to grant a pardon to a minister for acts performed in the King's service, convinced not only the King, but also the moderate section of the Council, that all hopes of conciliating the House of Commons must fail; so, writes Temple, "the three Lords began to . . . fall upon the thoughts of proroguing the Parliament as the only remedy left in the present distemper." Temple agreeing, the matter should have been discussed at the meeting, but—a striking instance of the breakdown of the new scheme—Sunderland, Essex, and Halifax, without even waiting for the consent of their more cautious colleagues, far less bringing the matter before the whole body of the King's advisers, resolved that the session should end forthwith. This the King, nothing loth, proceeded to effect at once, "to the great resentment of both Houses and such rage of my Lord Shaftesbury, that he said upon it aloud in the House, that he would have the heads of those who were the advisers of this prorogation."¹

Immediately before closing the session Charles gave his consent to the Habeas Corpus Act, a substantial safeguard of the liberty of the subject, although not such a great constitutional change as some writers imply, this legislative enactment being but an enlargement of a principle already admitted by the law. It has been reported, apparently with some evidence to support the story, that the Act only passed the Lords because the tellers, in a moment of temporary aberration or frivolity, counted one very corpulent peer as ten and thus obtained the requisite majority.²

The plan, scarcely disguised, of Shaftesbury to push forward the Duke of Monmouth in the place of the excluded James aroused considerable searching of heart in the politic and ambitious Halifax, who had no mind to see the elder statesman act the part of king maker. So, in conjunction with Sunderland and, possibly, Essex, Halifax determined by

¹ Temple, Vol. II., pp. 503, 504.

² "Parliamentary History," p. 1145; Burnet, Vol. I., p. 321.

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means of Henry Sidney, the newly appointed minister to the Hague, to broach to William of Orange the idea that his, the prince's, influence in England would be greatly increased by the acceptance of an English title, with the consequent seat in the House of Lords. "After dinner my Lord Sunderland and I fell into discourse of the prince, and particularly we thought it would be very good for him and everybody else, for him to come over in October, and take his place at the Council and in the House of Peers, and we thought it would be a great strengthening to our party." Sidney even went so far as to suggest "the Dukedom of Gloucester as a fitting title and to have all the dignities and rights of a third son of England."¹

The force of circumstances, however, brought this design to no effect. The victories of Monmouth over the rebellious Scotch Covenanters, and the temperate and merciful use he made of his success, so greatly enhanced his reputation that the "Triumvirate," fearing to receive some vigorous attack from their rival Shaftesbury, supported by his assured following in the Commons, determined to advise the King to dissolve Parliament.

Charles at this time lodged at Windsor, riding over to Hampton Court where the Privy Council held its sittings. According to Temple his advisers suggested that he should use his royal influence to persuade the individual councillors to agree to the proposed dissolution, the royal charm and condescension exercising great sway among the less distinguished members. Through forgetfulness or carelessness—Temple alleging the latter failing—but possibly prompted by a desire to ascertain the genuine opinion of the Council, Charles did not mention a word to anybody; having made up his own mind, he gave the first intimation of his decision by a speech at the Council Board. With one accord the members vehemently opposed the measure, the "Triumvirate" and Temple alone supporting the King, and even then in a somewhat halting manner;

¹ Sidney, Vol I., p. 30.

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but Charles insisted, and dissolved Parliament after a short and stormy existence of little more than six months.¹

This measure caused the breach between Shaftesbury and Halifax to become irreparable. Existing circumstances now compelled the peculiar talent of the latter to adopt a definite and plain policy; at the same time his mordant wit and speculative tendency of mind rendered him such agreeable company to the King, cast in somewhat of the same intellectual mould, that common report declared, "My Lord Halifax has become so great a courtier as is never from the King's elbow." As might be expected this intimacy created friction in other directions, "the hatred broke out into many violent and indecent instances, on Lord Shaftesbury's side, more anger appeared and more contempt in Lord Halifax."² Each statesman, moreover, continued to prosecute his individual intrigue concerning the succession, Shaftesbury pressing forward the Duke of Monmouth, Halifax, by means of Henry Sidney, approaching the Prince of Orange, when an unexpected occurrence shattered all their plans.

The King fell seriously ill—possibly the first attack of that internal disease which, some scientists believe, caused his death. "Last Wednesday his Majesty play'd at tennis and after y^t had been in bed and rubb'd he walked a long time by y^e water side. Y^e next day he found himself indispos'd and on Fryday morning he had a very great chillness and nummness in all his limbs especially his leggs and shoulders, and his head much indispos'd and heavy."³

The narrator then proceeds to detail certain remedies applied to the King and their result, leaving an impression on the mind of a reader of to-day that only the direct interposition of Providence, combined with a phenomenally good constitution, could have saved his Majesty from the, doubtless well-meant, efforts of his medical attendants.

¹ Temple, Vol. II., pp. 510, 512.

² Burnet, Vol. I., p. 31.

³ Hatton, Vol. I., p. 189.

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The illness and possible death of Charles brought dismay to the councils of the "Triumvirate"; should the King die, civil war appeared inevitable. "Good God! what a change such accident would make," wrote Henry Savile to Henry Sidney.¹

Monmouth, dominated by Shaftesbury, popular with the masses, and in command of the military forces of both England and Scotland, would for a certainty attempt to ascend the throne to the exclusion, not only of James—that event they might contemplate with equanimity—but also of William, on whom they set their hopes. Rumours arose, now known to be well founded, that plans were prepared for the seizure of dockyards and fortified places. Mindful of Shaftesbury's threats, dreading the consequences to themselves as well as to the country, Halifax, Sunderland and Essex, without consulting Temple, sent a secret intimation to the Duke of York urging him to return at once to the kingdom.

James joyfully consented; travelling day and night he arrived in London on the 2nd September, immediately journeying down to Windsor to see his brother the King. "Last night about nine of y^e clocke, his Royal Highness came to Sir Allen Appleby's house in St. James' Square and lay there, and early this morning went to Windsor where he was received by his Majst wth all possible demonstration of Joy." ² Charles received his brother's visit with pleasure, and when the latter complained of the usage accorded him, cheerfully replied: "Well, they have used me worse, and I am resolved we will stand or fall together."

Halifax and his colleagues kept the secret well; neither Shaftesbury nor Monmouth knew of James's coming until the moment of his actual arrival. "There were not above four persons who knew anything of the matter," ³ Reresby writes; but the effect of the presence of the heir apparent soon made itself felt among the fickle throng of courtiers:

¹ Savile Letters, p. 119.

² Hatton, Vol. I., pp. 191 *et passim*.

³ Reresby, p. 230.

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"Now y^e entertainment of the town is to enquire, Who goes for Windsor ? "

Happily Charles quickly became convalescent. "He will soon recover his strength as well as his health, having exchanged water gruel and potions for mutton and partridges on which he feeds frequently and heartily;" the happy results being due to a new remedy, "quinaquina"; but old Lady Sunderland had less comfort in the good news "because his fitts were put off by the Jesuits' powder" as at that time quinine was called in England. With the recovery of the King the troubles of the ministers recommenced; the making of suitable arrangements for the Duke of York being their chief difficulty. Sunderland and his colleagues brought home to James's obstinate mind the knowledge that it would be well for all parties to avoid any cause of offence or irritation to the new Parliament when it should meet, and that therefore it would be highly advisable for him to return, at least for a time, to Brussels, the proposition being rendered more palatable by a promise that the Duke of Monmouth should also be sent abroad and relieved of all his posts and employment.

It is possible that the argument of Henry Coventry may have added to their difficulties as carrying some weight, that it was most inadvisable, in the then position of continental politics, "to foist the heir to the throne into the power of a foreign prince, and that it would be more prudent to send him to Scotland."¹ This expedient may also have commended itself to ministers, as affording them an opportunity of getting rid of Lauderdale, who had gained the special hatred of Parliament and the profound distrust of the Privy Council, though still remaining very popular with the King, Charles declaring with truth that though Lauderdale's enemies "advanced many damned things against him they had shown nothing detrimental to his [the King's] service."²

¹ "James' Life," pp. 569—571.

² Burnet, Vol. I., p. 312.

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The Duke of York therefore left England on the 25th September, and journeyed to Brussels, for the purpose of fetching the duchess and his household.

All thinking men awaited with great anxiety the meeting of Parliament, for the news that the King, thoroughly awake to the schemes of Shaftesbury, had deprived the Duke of Monmouth of his military commands and sent him to the Hague caused considerable commotion and irritation in London, then always the centre of discontent and the stronghold of opposition to the court. The elections went badly against the Government, the odium of the dissolution and the excitement caused by James's reappearance doing much to destroy the influence of the "Triumvirate." The chief ministers were not happy. Sunderland, false as usual, began to intrigue anew with James; Halifax, harassed and uncertain, lost his health and temper of mind; Essex, dissatisfied, displayed even more than his usual dryness. Monmouth stayed in Holland and James was supposed to be in Flanders, when suddenly a royal yacht appeared in the river and he, his duchess and his family arrived in London on the 13th October.¹

Parliament should have met on the 17th October, but a short and reasonable prorogation for a fortnight was notified in order to prepare for legislation.

On the meeting of the Council the usual routine business passed, and those present, including Temple, thought the sitting was ending, when the King, after a little pause, "told us that upon many considerations, which he could not at present acquaint us with, he found it necessary to make a longer prorogation than he had intended of the Parliament; that he had considered all the consequences so far as to be absolutely resolved and not to hear anything that should be said against it that he would have it prorogued until that time twelvemonth."²

That the Council was stunned at this surprising resolution can easily be imagined, but Charles followed up the stroke

¹ Temple, Vol. II., p. 517.

² *Ibid.*, p. 521.

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with determination. On the 17th October, the same day that the session should have opened, he struck Lord Shaftesbury's name off the Privy Council. Upon this, when the Council reassembled in January, Lord Russell, Lord Cavendish, Sir Henry Capel, Essex's brother, and Mr. Powle, Barillon's pensioner, all Shaftesbury's obsequious followers, with great solemnity declared that they despaired of serving the King any longer and so asked permission to retire, to which Charles succinctly and sincerely replied : " With all my heart."

Thus ended Temple's great constitutional experiment, foredoomed from its inception to an inglorious end. That Charles perceived from the beginning the weakness of the plan is obvious ; that he did not endeavour to make the scheme workable is equally clear ; but he received little help from those who, having initiated the attempt, should have strenuously tried to make it a success.

Temple, who claimed the credit of paternity, possessed no qualities suitable to deal with the heavy political crisis then existing. Cautious, doctrinaire, somewhat vain, he is admirably described in Macaulay's caustic sentence : " He would rather see the nation in a scrape than get into a scrape himself." Halifax, infinitely more able, but speculative, supercilious and uncertain, a trimmer by nature and conviction, failed completely when circumstances demanded strong, straightforward action ; and Sunderland, flashy and false, Essex, dry and unsympathetic, were incapable of withstanding the able manœuvres of Shaftesbury, a master hand at intrigue.

Charles saw clearly that half-measures were of no avail ; that the exclusion of his brother formed the real basis of all the opposition he encountered, and exclusion he meant to fight by every means in his power. He would not trust men who could not trust themselves, so he chose the best opportunity for getting rid of them.

The Council would, in time, have inevitably fallen to pieces without any help from the King, but Charles thought that a propitious moment had arrived for giving the *coup*

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de grâce, and, but for an unfortunate incident, he might have proved right in his surmise.

In June Whitbread, Fenwick and three other Jesuits were tried, with every circumstance of judicial partiality arrayed against them, and executed amidst every element of popular brutality. Barely a month later Langhorne, a distinguished and reputable lawyer, also suffered—sworn to death, like the others, by the transparent falsehoods of Oates, Bedloe and the crew of perjurers whom Shaftesbury, for his political ends, encouraged and paid out of public funds, the evidence in Langhorne's case being so inconclusive that even the notorious Scroggs expressed his doubt as to its veracity.

All these unfortunate men, in moments of great mental strain and torture, declared their complete and perfect innocence, not only of the crime alleged against them, but of knowledge of any plot whatsoever. These declarations gradually took effect. The mad panic which had obsessed the nation subsided ; the people—for the English nation is not a cruel race—began to sicken at the sight of so much blood, with the result that Sir George Wakeman and three Benedictine monks, charged with conspiracy to poison the King, secured an acquittal, Oates being so cross-examined as to break down in his evidence and hurry from the court on the plea of being indisposed.

This reaction and the general sympathy evoked by the illness of the King furnished a moment which would have proved suitable for the introduction of measures more in accord with Charles's wishes, had not the still latent antagonism against the Roman Catholics been stimulated by the discovery of another conspiracy fomented, so it was alleged, by the Presbyterians, who intended to destroy the Government and then slaughter the papists.

This so-called "meal tub" plot, for the incriminating papers were found in a meal tub, originated in the disclosures of another member of the infamous army of informers, a notorious villain named Dangerfield, and a Roman Catholic midwife, Elizabeth Cellier.

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Dangerfield, true to the traditions of his profession, turned king's evidence and endeavoured to incriminate his reputed accomplice by declaring that this new plot was, in reality, a fabrication promoted by the papists, and favoured by the Duke of York, for the purpose of casting discredit on well-known Protestant noblemen. Dangerfield, having been burnt in the hand for felony, pilloried and imprisoned for cheating, found himself totally discredited as a witness when he appeared before the judges; indeed, the whole concern was nothing but a tissue of palpable lies; yet the object of those who concocted the tale appears to have been attained by once more arousing public apprehension and reviving a certain degree of hostility to the unhappy papists, Lord Castlemaine and Lady Powys being sent to the Tower on a charge of conspiring to murder the King.¹

Owing, as some writers assert, to the revelations of the "meal tub" plot, but more probably from a complete dis-severance of opinion, Lord Essex resigned the Treasury in October. Halifax having retreated to the country and Temple rarely appearing at the Council table, the *onus* of the administration at this time fell on three young politicians—Sunderland, Godolphin and Laurence Hyde, known in the annals of the period as "the Chits," from the lines of a popular lampoon;

" But Sunderland, Godolphin, Lorry,
These will appear as chits in story
'Twill turn all politics to jest." ²

In reality Charles himself assumed the helm of government, for the ominous aspect of the political horizon called for no small skill and courage in the steersman.

Shaftesbury, believing that the moment of his triumph drew near, induced the Duke of Monmouth secretly to leave Holland. On the 28th November he reappeared in London, where, thanks, perhaps, to good organisation "y^e bells in all y^e churches ring all y^e morning incessantly and

¹ State Trials.

² Burnet, Vol. I., p. 317

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bonne fires presently kindled on several places and great acclamations in all streets; joyful news to England, y^e Duke of Monmouth returned." To such a pitch did the excitement rise that "y^e rabble being very numerous stopped all coaches even my Lord Chancellor's and wou'd not let him pass till he cried; God bless y^e Duke of Monmouth." ¹

To Charles this sudden advent brought no pleasure. Barillon declares that the Duke lay hidden in Shaftesbury's house, and all things pointed to a serious agitation throughout the country, for the Green Ribbon Club, the centre of the anti-court propaganda, had well prepared the ground, even for a revolution, by strenuous and persistent work.

A ready means of keeping the jealousies of the "brisk boys" of London at fever heat was found in the so-called "Pope burnings," or processions of people habited as priests and headed by a man on horseback dressed like a Jesuit, bearing in his arms the figure of a dead body while an accompanying bellman vociferated, "Remember Mr. Justice Godfrey," the whole celebration concluding with the burning of an effigy of the Pope. ²

Elkanah Settle and other scribes by means of pamphlets distorted news and greatly agitated men's minds; for although Dryden, speaking of another poetaster, the laureate of the club, might write in disparaging terms:

"Shadwell, alone of all my sons is he
Who stands confirmed in full stupidity;
The rest to some faint meaning make pretence
But Shadwell never deviates into sense."

yet some of these scribblers produced matter, as in the present day, exactly suited to inflame an excitable and alarmed people.

Nell Gwyn entertained Monmouth and pestered the King to grant him an audience as he looked "so pale, wan, leane

¹ Hatton, Vol. I., p. 203.

² North, "Examen," p. 574.

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and long visaged," but Charles "told her to be quiet"; he intended to deal with the situation seriously and determinedly.¹

Both the present and the outlook showed little to cheer or encourage him. He possessed no friends. As Reresby relates, "The officers of the Crown and the household were clamorous for salaries and for dues which had not for a long time been paid." The chief of the Exchequer declared "there was not money enough for bread for the King's family; there were no stores anywhere either for the sea service or the land; the garrisons all out of repair." The country seethed with discontent, and one of the parties in the State plotted, if not revolution, at least armed resistance to the Government.²

Yet, without a minister of experience or weight to help him, deserted even by his mistresses, this careless libertine, this Merrie Monarch as he has hitherto always been described, alone and unaided brought the country through a most serious crisis and emerged victorious.

By fighting against the exclusion of his brother from the throne Charles fought for the principle of hereditary monarchy, and thus saved the nation from the dangers and difficulties of a disputed succession. But his task required wonderful adroitness as well as courage and firmness, all three qualities which Charles possessed in a marked degree.

He positively refused to see Monmouth, ordered him to leave London immediately and deprived him of his command of the Company of Guards, which, to clench the matter, he conferred at once on the Duke of Albemarle.³

In answer to these measures Shaftesbury began a campaign of petitioning that Parliament should meet forthwith. On the 9th December seventeen Whig peers, headed by Prince Rupert, "Mr. Alderman Shiftesbury's footman," attended the court and presented an urgent request for the reassembling of the Houses. Charles promised a reply and expressed

¹ Verney Papers.

² Reresby, pp. 226, 227.

³ "James' Life," p. 279.

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a wish that others were as anxious as himself for the prosperity and good government of the country.¹

He gave the promised answer two days later ; it took the form of a proclamation against seditious petitioning, and a further prorogation to November, 1680.

When, in despite of the royal pronouncement, petitions still poured in, Charles, with perfect equanimity and happy readiness of speech, dealt with each class of applicant. Thomas Thynne, Tom of Ten Thousand, the great Wiltshire squire, and his companions appeared and presented their request. "From whom does this come?" asked the King. "From the sessions?"—"No." "From the grand jury?"—"No." Whereupon Charles "ruffly" replied "That he wondered gentlemen would own anything from a rabble, that it appertained to his right to call a Parliament when he thought it convenient, and should not do it sooner for such proceedings."²

But to his friends from Berkshire the royal demeanour showed more agreeably. "We will argue this matter over a cup of ale when we meet at Windsor, but I wonder my neighbours should meddle with my business," was the soft answer which turned away wrath. Practical steps also were taken by the King's friends to support his authority; a petition abhorring the disloyal attempt to control the judgment of the monarch came from the Scotch Privy Council, and many other bodies, municipal and social, followed the example, Westminster being prominent in pronouncements of loyalty, and the county of Norfolk expressing its thanks to the King for recalling the duke from Flanders.³

The war of pamphlets continued, publications being issued in great quantities on both sides containing a strength of invective and a wealth of split infinitives sufficient to appal the soul of a modern scribe.

The country became divided into two camps. "Petitioners" and "Abhorrrers" were the names first used, but

¹ Christie, "Shaftesbury," Vol. II., p. 354.

² Sidney Diary, Vol. I., p. 252.

³ Luttrell, pp. 1, 3; Lingard, pp. 12, 224; Bulstrode, p. 310.

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before long the clumsiness of the designation obliged men to adopt some shorter abusive description, and so the words "Whig," or "Sour Milk," quite applicable to a dour-visaged jaundiced Scotch Covenanter, got attached to one party, and "Tory," a ragged bog-trotting Irish robber, was the title conferred on the other, and remained as appropriate appellations for many a long day.

Late in January Charles informed the Council that, after due deliberation, he intended to send for his brother the Duke of York, as no good effects resulted from that prince's continued absence. At this announcement, as stated before, Lord Russell and the other prominent members of the Shaftesbury faction, prompted by their chief, left the Council; but nothing deterred by the defection Charles communicated with his brother, and on the 24th February, 1680, James and his wife "arrived happilee at the Privie Stairs" in London, their coming adding greatly to the growing discomfiture of the Popular party.¹

The City of London welcomed the duke home in a congratulatory address read by the Recorder, and the Corporation entertained the royal brothers in the manner in which the City dignitaries have always dispensed hospitality, this time winding up with a grand illumination, possibly as a counterfoil to the Green Ribbon bonfires.

Striving to find some cry, which might arouse public apprehension, in the place of the popish plot, now grown somewhat stale, Shaftesbury revived the story of the black box, a mysterious receptacle in which somebody, never accurately defined, had deposited the deeds which proved the marriage of the King with Mrs. Barlow, the mother of the Duke of Monmouth.

With the energy he then displayed in all matters Charles immediately took steps to stop the scandal. Hearing that rumour designated Sir Gilbert Gerrard as the witness who could testify to the truth of the documents, the King sent for him together with all the judges and asked Sir Gilbert whether he had ever seen these pretended papers. Sir Gilbert

¹ "James' Life," p. 588.

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denied any such knowledge, but Charles, not content with his bare word, fortified by the opinion of the judges, made the witness take a solemn oath, and then declared in the *Gazette*, on two occasions, an explicit repudiation, calling God to witness, on the word of a king and the faith of a Christian, that he was never married to any other woman but the Queen.¹

Foiled in this direction, on the 16th June Shaftesbury, accompanied by Lords Russell, Cavendish, Grey de Werke and several prominent Whigs, attended the Court of King's Bench, and there, under the statute, presented the Duke of York as a recusant, and the Duchess of Portsmouth as a common nuisance,—an awkward charge, especially the latter clause, which Scroggs, the Chief Justice, only evaded by suddenly discharging the grand jury from further attendance.²

Feeling the gravity of the crisis, and knowing that Parliament must soon reassemble, Charles bethought himself of an expedient to gain public confidence by making a defensive league with Spain. The Spanish trade contributed largely to the National commerce; an alliance for the purpose of maintaining the peace of Nimuegen would, it was surmised, be popular, and even if the attempt failed, France, who lately had not shown any signs of sympathy or desire for friendship, would be taught a useful lesson.

Temple and Sunderland both supported the treaty, which, "signed in June," as Secretary Jenkins wrote to the minister at Brussels, "is to the same effect as that made in 1673 between Spain and Holland and that in 1678 between his Majesty and Holland. It is his Majesty's instruction to all his ministers abroad not to make any flourish or noise on our part about this League but . . . only to avow that it can give no offence or umbrage to any neighbouring prince as being purely defensive."³

At the Council in August the King announced his intention of summoning Parliament in October, and at once the

¹ Hatton Correspondence, Vol. I., p. 225; "James' Life," p. 590.

² Temple, Vol. II., p. 530; "James' Life," p. 591.

³ Bulstrode, p. 312.

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stream of political agitation commenced to flow even more strongly than before.

Shaftesbury, with great cunning, many threats and some offers of substantial reward, induced the Duchess of Portsmouth, frightened at the prospect before her, to enter into a covert alliance with himself and his friends and to bring her presumably potent influence to bear on the King.

James, already greatly alarmed at the triumphal progress of Monmouth through the Western Counties—where at fairs, meetings and horse races he had been received with joyous acclamation from the very Protestant people of that part of the country—and still more apprehensive of this sudden accession of back-stair influence, determined to take vigorous steps to assert his own pretensions. He did so with the sole result which invariably attended his efforts—the arousing of still greater acerbity in his opponents.

On all sides pressure and even threats were brought to bear upon the King. Shaftesbury, when told that Charles regarded the conduct of the petitioners as seditious, went to the length of replying: "We will keep within the bounds of the law and shall easily find the means by the law of making him walk out of the country." Essex, the Duchess of Portsmouth, even the tactful Godolphin, who, as Charles once wittily observed, was never in the way and never out of it, all urged that the only hope of safety lay in exclusion, and that the duke, at least, should leave London at once.¹

The party for exclusion, finding threats unavailing with the King, tried bribery—£600,000 per annum and the right to nominate a successor—an offer which caused Halifax to remark that "it was like offering a man money to cut off his own nose." But nothing produced the least effect on Charles. His good humour continued imperturbable, his manners as affable as ever, though the violence of the agitation against his brother and the obstinate dullness that brother displayed brought home to him the abnormal difficulties of the situation. He therefore allowed the subject of the duke's departure from the court to be mooted at

¹ "James' Life," p. 593; Christie, "Shaftesbury," Vol. II., p. 367.

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the Council, when, to his surprise, he found that a majority desired, or at least assumed the desire, to retain the presence of James in London. Seeing new intrigues in this attitude, and fearing that his brother's clumsy touch might ruin both himself and the kingdom, Charles with wise satire exclaimed ; " Odd's fish ! if he has so many friends, he must go." ¹

In October, 1680, James departed, angry and fearful that his interests would be betrayed ; and as he went he foolishly and indiscreetly informed Barillon of his intention of raising an armed force in Scotland and fighting for his rights.

Parliament met on the 21st October. In the Speech from the Throne, so carefully prepared that he read it from a sheet of paper,² Charles informed the Houses of his alliance with Spain, and then earnestly declared : " I think fit to renew to you all the assurance which can be desired, that nothing shall be wanting on my part to give to you the fullest satisfaction your hearts can wish for the security of the Protestant religion, which I am fully resolved to maintain against all the conspiracy of our enemies ; and to concur with you in any new remedies which may be proposed, that may consist with preserving the succession of the Crown in its due and legal course of descent." At the end of this short speech he added a few wise and sincere words endorsing the need of " union among ourselves ; nothing but this can restore the kingdom to that strength and vigour which it seems to have lost ; and raise us again to that consideration which England hath usually had. All Europe has her eyes upon this assembly." ³

Charles, in his Speech from the Throne, William of Orange, in his private correspondence, both expressed, in almost similar phrase, the same thought. " I am extremely sorry to learn that the session begins with so much heat and passion ; may God make people wise and moderate, for surely on this meeting of Parliament depends the good or

¹ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 315 ; Reresby, pp. 228, 238.

² Lords' Journals.

³ " Parliamentary History," p. 1161.

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ill of Europe.”¹ Such consideration had but little weight with the corrupt intriguers, purblind enthusiasts or sordid self-seekers, who formed the major part of the Parliament of Charles ; the plan of campaign had been most admirably arranged by those who advocated exclusion. Dangerfield, the informer, attended a sitting of the House and curdled the blood of the members with his revelations ; then, before the agitation subsided, Lord Russell and Sir Henry Capel, the latter in a long and laboured indictment of Roman Catholicism, brought in a resolution for suppressing popery. Seven days later the Exclusion Bill was introduced and debated at length, when, though no new arguments were advanced, more than one member threatened civil war. Finally the Bill passed, receiving overwhelming support notwithstanding that the King sent a second message urging the House to respect the rights of succession.²

In the four days which intervened before the Bill came up to the Lords Charles exerted himself most vigorously to stimulate opposition to it.

Lord Russell, who carried the Bill to the Upper House, came attended by a tumultuous crowd of the Commons, as well as by the Lord Mayor and Corporation in state, nothing being left undone to neutralise the royal endeavours by showing the bent of the popular will.³

The debate in reality took the form of a duel between Lord Shaftesbury and Lord Halifax, the latter according to Barillon, “confronted (*tint tête*) his antagonist and answered him every time he spoke.” Charles sat and listened to the arguments ; he saw the flashy Sunderland desert his master’s cause and join the ranks of the Opposition ; he heard the dry grave language of Essex unmoved ; but when Monmouth, an empty-headed fool—but who, again according to Barillon, “on this occasion did not speak ill,”—vehemently declared that he should vote for the Bill, as the

¹ Dalrymple, p. 373.

² “Parliamentary History,” pp. 1162 *et passim* ; “James’ Life,” pp. 601 *et passim*.

³ “James’ Life,” p. 617 ; Reresby, p. 234.

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only means of saving the King from the Duke of York, Charles in an audible whisper bitterly remarked: "A Judas kiss."

Halifax slew the Bill. No record remains of his speeches; he spoke fifteen or sixteen times, always with cogency, so much so that Macaulay recorded that old men who listened to the giants of debate in later years still murmured that they had heard nothing like the great speeches of Lord Halifax on the Exclusion Bill. All contemporaries use terms of unstinted eulogy; Burnet, disliking and fearing Halifax, yet is constrained to admit: "He gained great honour in the debate and had a visible superiority to Lord Shaftesbury";¹ while Reresby unreservedly writes: "Being a man of the clearest head, finest wit and fairest eloquence, he made so powerful a defence that he alone, so all confessed, influenced the House and persuaded them to throw out the Bill."²

The great battle had been fought, and a notable victory remained to Charles; for never again did Shaftesbury, his only powerful antagonist, prove really dangerous.

Without armed force, without money, by the display of consummate tact and knowledge of men, alone and unaided, his friends Godolphin and Sunderland, his mistresses Portsmouth and Nell Gwyn deserting to the enemy, Charles, playing one statesman against another, obtained a bloodless victory after a long and strenuous campaign.

In his efforts he at least was sincere. He fought not for himself, not even for his brother only, for, as he told Bulstrode and others,³ he felt grave doubts as to whether that brother would keep the throne if he ever inherited it; he fought for the principle of the rightful succession and to save his country from a civil war. Offers were made to him most calculated to appeal to his self-indulgent character; he rejected them at once. Threats, not veiled but open, were heard on every side; he laughed, and passed them by

¹ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 320; Macaulay, "Essays," p. 457; Dalrymple, p. 362.

² Reresby, p. 234.

³ Bulstrode's Memoirs.

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with a witty jest. Never losing his temper or his cheerfulness, he strove to carry the principle which he honestly believed to be right, and he succeeded.

He knew, in a degree, for it was only just created, that the atmosphere of party strife when heated to a pitch of fervour is destructive of real patriotism. From his experience of mankind in many courts besides his own he could well surmise the fact, which we unhappily know to be true, that only the greatest statesmen, born and living amidst matters of vast national importance, in whom the magnitude of their task overwhelms the personal equation, can be impervious to hopes of advancement or fears of defeat, or are able to occupy such an exalted standpoint that the mists of party politics cannot obscure their higher vision. He knew the frailties of the men with whom he dealt, and he manipulated their weakness to his own advantage with consummate skill.

In Charles's time, as now, there were, happily for the nation, many men, serious thoughtful patriots, who had no object but the good of their country; but then, as now, such men always showed a marked distaste for the contrivances and evasions inseparable from party strife, and took the first opportunity of severing themselves from party ties and following the bent of their own individual judgment.

Shaftesbury and Halifax belonged to neither of the above categories.

That Shaftesbury used his great powers for the purposes of placing on the Throne of England a bastard, the son of a loose woman, who died the death of a prostitute, is sufficient condemnation for all time. There could be but one reason for his conduct—overweening ambition, greed of power, absorbing selfishness worthy in a responsible statesman of any disgrace or any doom. His hatred of popery and his fears of James are no excuse. He had but to urge limitation of the kingly power, in the event of a Roman Catholic ascending the Throne, and from King and Commons he would have met with whole-hearted support. Charles explicitly stated

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that he would be willing "to pare the nails" of a popish successor;¹ the majority of both Houses would gladly have co-operated, and no effort of James could have upset the settlement.

But such policy did not satisfy the aspirations of Shaftesbury; he wished to be the king maker, and, with a base-born monarch, the substance of power, so he hoped, would remain in the hands of the man who placed the *roi fainéant* on the throne.

Halifax, cast in a different mould, yet possessed much of the same alloy; his desire for honorary distinction—from Sir George Savile, by successive steps, to Marquis of Halifax—shows a strange weakness in one of his aristocratic breeding and cultivated intellect. That he disliked James and feared his advent to the throne is indisputable; but he also saw clearly the dangers of ousting from the succession one by birth entitled to it, who, in the prime of life, courageous and obstinate, at the head of armed forces, would in the event of civil strife be assured of receiving the support not only of the Cavaliers of England, still a formidable body, but also of the Parliaments both of Scotland and Ireland.

Probably Barillon, himself a keen observer of human nature, was right when he wrote to his master: "What instigated Lord Halifax is that he finds himself neglected and discredited by both parties. His object is to recover his reputation"—an assertion supported by Burnet's bitter remark "that his superiority over Lord Shaftesbury was to him triumph enough."²

The rejection of the Exclusion Bill struck a heavy blow at Shaftesbury's influence. At the next sitting of the Lords, casting about to find some expedient for raising the depressed spirits of his followers, he moved, as the best means of securing the safety of the State and Protestant religion, that the King's marriage be annulled, and, as the Queen had proved incapable of bearing children, the immediate

¹ Reresby, p. 210.

² Christie, "Shaftesbury," Vol. II., p. 376; Burnet, Vol. I., p. 320.

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marriage of Charles to a Protestant princess for the purpose of raising up a Protestant heir.¹

"I will not have such an insult passed on an innocent woman," Charles replied, and canvassed his friends in the House to oppose the Bill.

In carrying out this request, and as a means of proving that in no respect could Catherine be called a barren woman, Lord Clarendon related so many specific and private details concerning her Majesty that Charles, with a humorous shake of his head, exclaimed: "Odd's fish! I do not altogether like Lord Clarendon being so intimate with my wife's concerns."²

To show his disapproval of this attack, and "to give a proof of his extraordinary affection for the Queen, Charles seated himself after dinner in her apartment and slept there a long time, which he has been in the habit of doing only in the Duchess of Portsmouth's chamber."³

The Bill met with such an adverse reception that Shaftesbury withdrew it, and urged the Commons, furious at the rejection of their exclusion measure, to adopt retaliatory tactics against all who opposed them. Acting upon this advice they impeached both Lord Chief Justice North and Lord Chief Justice Scroggs—besides presenting an address praying the King to remove the Earl of Halifax from his presence and his councils for ever, to which Charles with grim humour responded that he found the address liable to several exceptions, but, as he wished to preserve all possible good understanding with the House, he declined to enter into particulars; that no sufficient grounds had been "advanced against Lord Halifax; but if at any time, in due and regular course, any crime should be proved against the earl or *anybody* else he would leave him or them to their own legal defence, without interposing to protect them."⁴

Foiled in this direction also, the Commons turned on the most defenceless victim they could find, and hurried

¹ Sidney, Vol. II., p. 126.

² Barillon, 22nd November; Christie, "Shaftesbury," Vol. II., p. 381.

³ Barillon, 18th November; Christie, "Shaftesbury," Vol. II., p. 373.

⁴ "Parliamentary History," p. 1223.

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Lord Stafford, one of the popish peers in the Tower, to his trial and his doom.

In his seventieth year, a gentle amiable man of mediocre intelligence, utterly unfitted for plotting, "he would have trembled at the sight of a drawn sword," there is good reason to believe that the prosecution chose him as the least likely of all the accused to make a good defence, or cast discredit on the rapidly waning power of the witnesses to the plot; for in those hard days a prisoner on his trial for treason was denied the right to be represented by counsel, and must rely on his own unaided efforts to prove his innocence.

For six days the unfortunate peer struggled with the lies of Oates, Dugdale and Turberville, but to no avail; he was found guilty and executed, dying, as did all the other victims, with firmness and dignity protesting his innocence to the last.¹

Although by the rejection of the Exclusion Bill the King gained a victory, both his own state and that of the Government continued in a most forlorn condition. No supply had been voted, the treasury lay absolutely empty, while the country remained in a condition of serious alarm and unrest, so serious that the fear of civil war filled many minds, and Halifax observed to Sir John Reresby: "Well! if it comes to a war you and I must go together."²

Spain and Holland urged the King to carry out the conditions of the lately signed treaty, especially in the direction of the defence of Tangiers. Charles, therefore, again approached Parliament and asked for supplies, once more reiterating his perfect willingness to adopt any measures for the protection of the Protestant religion short of interfering with the rightful succession to the Crown.

The Commons replied by a manifesto, declaring that they would give supplies for the defence of Tangiers and other purposes only on condition that the King consented to the absolute exclusion of the Duke of York from the throne;

¹ State Trials; Burnet, Vol. I., p. 323.

² Reresby, p. 240.

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that such men alone should be appointed judges "as were of known affection to the Protestant religion; that the King should relinquish his power of creating the said judges, who should hold their office *quamdiu bene gesserint*; and that only Protestants should be appointed to all civil, military, and naval offices."¹

The temper of the debate displayed the spirit of the Commons, and the behaviour of his advisers in this serious dilemma showed how little reliance the King could place on the disinterestedness of his ministers. The only alternative to surrender appeared to be a dissolution; this Halifax opposed, as he feared that by dissolving Parliament a way might be found for the liberation of Lord Danby, and in Danby Halifax recognised his most dangerous rival for the premiership.

But Charles was in no mood for temporising. He believed that the country showed signs of a reaction; he knew that this Parliament would be contented with nothing less than exclusion, and that he never meant to yield. Yet all seemed desirous that he should forsake his principles. William of Orange advised conciliation; the States of Holland forwarded a memorial to the same effect. The Council itself almost unanimously decided against dissolution, Temple asserting that the King must agree with either this or some other Parliament if his affairs were to prosper.²

Yet Charles remained firm, and on his own initiative issued the proclamation of dissolution, notwithstanding that Temple and others objected "that that which over night the Council agreed upon should not be altered next morning in the King's chamber." Not content with thus exercising his individual judgment, Charles dismissed the shifty Sunderland from the Secretaryship of State and struck his name and those of Essex and Temple from the list of the Privy Council.³

The Commons gained an inkling of what was proposed,

¹ "Parliamentary History," p. 1255.

² Temple, Vol. II., p. 536.

³ Sidney, Vol. II., p. 165

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and passed three fulminating resolutions, against the Duke of York, against those who should lend money to the King (a hit below the belt), and against all who advised a prorogation ; but while engaged in this occupation Black Rod knocked at the door, Parliament was prorogued, and a few days afterwards dissolved.¹

This dissolution left the nation in a state of profound agitation. London, as usual, showed violent antipathy to the court, and returned the same four members of Parliament, all pledged to the exclusion of James. Similar feelings predominated in many other parts of the country, "where the Russell faction was like a spring tide at full moon"²; while the Green Ribbon Club kept public opinion at fever heat with its Pope burnings, propaganda, libels and pamphlets.

Amidst all the excitement Charles preserved his good-humoured imperturbability. He "seemed quite free from care and trouble, though one would have thought he should have been overwhelmed therewith"³; as a fact, he carefully laid his plans and waited for the right moment to put them into execution. He believed, and the surmise proved right, that the nation was beginning to be alarmed at the pretensions of Parliament, so he bided his time with consummate coolness and equanimity.

He turned the weapons of the House of Commons against themselves ; they resolved that it should be illegal for any person to lend money to the King ; so, accepting the resolution in the letter if not the spirit, he sent Lord St. Albans to Barillon, with an intimation that the proposals that ambassador had been authorised to make, but which Charles previously showed no disposition to accept, would now be admitted for discussion.

This time France took the initiative. Louis felt alarmed at the alliance just concluded with Spain ; therefore, nearly a month before the dissolution, he instructed Barillon to offer

¹ "Parliamentary History," p. 1294.

² Aylesbury, p. 53.

³ Reresby, p. 239.

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the English King a large subsidy—2,000,000 francs the first year, 500,000 crowns the next two years—if a way could be found for a gradual withdrawal from the Spanish treaty, if the penal laws against the Roman Catholics would be mitigated and a promise given that Parliament should be restrained from taking measures antagonistic to France or, if thus disposed, should be dissolved again.¹

It is a curious commentary upon the manners and customs of the English court that, as the negotiations necessarily were conducted with great secrecy, no place in the palace of sufficient privacy could be found except in the Queen's bedroom; there, in the narrow space between the bed and the wall, hidden by the curtains, "*dans la ruelle du lit*," the King of England and the French Ambassador carried on their confidential communications. No treaty was signed, the arrangement being merely verbal and communicated to few, if any, of the ministers; but the supply of money fortified Charles's resolution and enabled him to complete his preparation at a singularly critical period.

The announcement that the new Parliament would meet at Oxford inflicted a severe blow on the Shaftesbury party. Probably the advice to choose the loyal university city came from Danby, who, although still detained in the Tower, yet frequently communicated with the King. This choice of place deprived the Popular party of their most potent weapon, the turbulent London mob, the "brisk boys," who by their numbers and vehemence intimidated even Parliament itself.

As the day of meeting approached, Oxford presented an unprecedented appearance. Shaftesbury and his friends, accompanied by troops of servants, all well armed, rode into the city; as one writer remarked, "it seemed more like a meeting of county militia than the assembling of Parliament." The rival factions wore their party colours: blue, woven with the words, "No Popery. No slavery," desig-

¹ Dalrymple, p. 362.

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nated the Popular party ; red favours, inscribed with loyal mottoes, the King's friends.¹

Charles neglected no precautions ; the garrisons were strengthened, his guards attended him in full force, and Lord Oxford's Regiment of Horse Guards, the Blues, lined the road towards Windsor.²

The undergraduates being all sent home, Charles and his friends occupied Christ Church, the Opposition taking up their quarters in Balliol, and the whole city reeked with partisan feelings.³ Parliament met on Monday, the 21st March, the Lords in the Geometry School, the Commons in the Convocation House, when the King, in his Speech from the Throne, told them with stern decision, "that the unwarrantable proceedings of the last House of Commons was the occasion of his parting with the last Parliament" ; for, "I who will never use arbitrary government myself, am resolved not to suffer it in others."

With dignity and restraint he pointed out that his foreign policy coincided with their express wishes ; that he, as well as they, desired to preserve the liberty of the subject. He agreed that a just protection of the religion of the country must be ensured ; and he then concluded with the wise and moderate declaration :

"What I have formerly and so often declared touching the succession I cannot depart from ; but to remove all reasonable fears that may arise from the possibility of a popish successor coming to the Crown ; if means can be found, that in such a case the administration of the government may remain in Protestant hands, I shall be ready to hearken to any such expedient, by which the religion might be preserved, and the monarchy not destroyed."⁴

The Commons answered these conciliatory remarks by immediately bringing in a Bill of Exclusion, cast in exactly the same mould as heretofore ; and to further demonstrate

¹ North, "Examen," p. 101 ; Echard's "History."

² "James' Life," p. 667.

³ Aylesbury, Vol. I., p. 54.

⁴ "Parliamentary History," p. 1303.

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their inveterate antagonism to the King and the Lords, and to resuscitate, if possible, the almost defunct popish plot, endeavoured to force the Upper House to concur in an impeachment of Fitzharris, a noted Irish papist, already standing for trial before the ordinary judicial tribunals.

Charles saw his opportunity, and availed himself of it with the quick decision which now marked all his actions. The Commons complained of the inadequate accommodation afforded them. Charles interested himself in the matter, and personally superintended the alterations necessary for the transference of the session from the Convocation House to the new Sheldonian Theatre. Diverting attention by this ostentatious care, on Saturday, for the comfort of his Legislature, on Sunday he convened the Cabinet Council; and, taking as his reason the heated controversy between the two Houses, announced his intention of dissolving Parliament. On Monday he attended the sitting of the Lords, as usual riding to the place of meeting in a sedan chair, followed on this occasion by another conveyance, in which, instead of a gentleman-in-waiting, the royal robes and insignia were secreted.¹

A command to attend at the bar of the House brought the Commons thronging tumultuously, led by their Speaker, Williams, no favourite at court, Lord Russell and Lord Cavendish. The Opposition openly exulted; the King had capitulated, they came to receive his surrender, and the triumph of the Whigs would be complete.

The King spoke: "That all the world may see to what a point we are come; that we are not like to have a good end when the divisions of the beginning are such; therefore my Lord Chancellor do as I have commanded you"; and the last Parliament of Charles II. ceased to exist.

Consternation struck the whole Lower House. "I was witness of the dreadful faces of the members and their loud sighs," wrote an observer of the incident, to whom Charles, stepping down from the throne and divesting himself of the

¹ North, "Examen," p. 104; Reresby, p. 245; Burnet, Vol. I., p. 328.

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royal robes, turned and said, placing a hand on his shoulder : " You are now a better man than you were a quarter of an hour since ; you had better have one king than five hundred." ¹

Dining in public, with music and due state as usual, the King, after sitting a short time, rose and, quietly getting into Sir Edward Seymour's coach, drove off some little distance from the city, where he met his escort, and then, as fast as possible, hurried to Windsor and afterwards to Whitehall.

Practically alone and unaided, Charles had triumphed ; the crisis of his reign was over. Till his death, five years afterwards, he reigned unquestioned and supreme.

He gauged the public feeling accurately. He knew that the excesses of Shaftesbury and his faction alarmed all moderate men by recalling the days of the Civil War ; he understood, moreover, the character of his countrymen ; and, with his own innate cynical good-humour, agreed with Sorbière's description : " The English may be easily brought to anything provided you fill their bellies ; let them have freedom of speech, and do not bear too hard upon their lazy tempers." Charles waited for his victory. He bore more insults and suffered greater disregard, not only of his wishes, but of his just claims, than any other sovereign in English history ; he sustained it all with matchless non-chalance, never losing his temper, never losing his head, knowing exactly the time to do nothing, choosing to an hour the moment for decisive action.

In every one of these attributes the Opposition failed. They talked when they should have acted, and, as after events proved, tried practical measures when too late. If Shaftesbury had really possessed the qualities of a great statesman he would have availed himself more fully of the favourable moment, and have forced the exclusion of his brother on a king without money and without armed power. He lost the opportunity ; Charles took care that it should not occur again.

¹ Aylesbury, *Memoirs*, p. 56.

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Immediately after the dissolution the Tory peers and squires hurried off to their homes as fast as they could get horses to carry or draw them ; the despondent Whigs did the same, but they left Oxford a beaten host.

Within a few days from the dispersal of Parliament Charles issued a declaration concerning the causes which induced him to dissolve the last two Parliaments ; he recounted the actions, arbitrary and illegal, of the House of Commons, their unconstitutional behaviour in several instances, their rejection of offers of compromise. This document, read in every parish church, helped largely to turn the feelings of the people in favour of the King, always personally popular, and to cause the nation to regard him as an ill-used man. An able vindication of the Whig policy also appeared, written, it is said, by Sir William Jones and Lord Somers ; but the reply missed the mark ; the plot stank in the nostrils of decent people, and the plot provided the only logical excuse for the vehemence of the Whig attitude.¹

Yet before it completely vanished the plot claimed two more victims. Fitzharris, a villainous adventurer, probably a paid spy, but one who managed his information so badly that the fate he hoped to bring on others recoiled upon himself, wrote a libel, absurd and ridiculous in its malice, accusing the papists of conspiring to bring foreign armies into Ireland and England ; of compassing the death of the King—the old story ; and of taking steps to slay the Protestant leaders, whose bodies would then be boiled down so as to make a “*sainte ampoule*” for the coronation of some future popish monarch, James, Duke of York, apparently being the sovereign destined to be anointed with this fragrant concoction.² Fitzharris, tried and sentenced on the 1st July, deserved his fate ; but the dignified and venerable Edward Plunket, Archbishop of Armagh, charged with the usual schemes imputed to all Roman Catholics, should have been saved from his doom. None could be found at his trial

¹ Kennet, p. 398 ; “*Parliamentary History*,” Appendix.

² *State Trials*.

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to testify in his favour until a verdict of " Guilty " had been recorded and sentence passed, when Lord Essex, a noted Whig and ex-Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, petitioned the King for grace, stating that he knew, from his own knowledge, that the charges could not be true ; whereupon Charles, who often strove before to save innocent men—Lord Stafford, Langhorne, and others—only to be overborne by the Whig element in his Council, turned with justifiable indignation and replied : " Then, my lord, his blood be on your head ; you might have saved him if you would ; I cannot pardon him because I *dare* not." Prideaux asserts that Shaftesbury suborned the witnesses in order to revive the plot ; if so it was of small avail, the archbishop being the last victim to suffer on this account.¹

The plot once dead a reaction in public opinion soon set in, and with it retribution on those politicians who, if they did not contrive, at least benefited by the iniquitous and wicked fiction.

The failure of his plans, the discomfiture of his party, left Shaftesbury at the mercy of the court. On the 2nd July, three Irish witnesses swore an information against him for having induced them to give false testimony against the Queen, the Duke of York, the Lord Lieutenant and the Lord Chancellor of Ireland.

Always frail in body, the courage of the accused peer failed him when committed to the Tower, and he made overtures to the King, through an old colleague, Lord Arlington, for release, promising to retire to Carolina, where he owned a large estate, and never to return to this country. Charles refused the application and left the matter to the ordinary course of law.²

For years past the City of London had possessed strong anti-court opinions, the sheriffs professing that political creed invariably being elected, as a friendly writer allows, principally for the purpose of providing juries in sympathy with the views of the Popular party. Shaftesbury's influence

¹ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 331 ; Prideaux, Letters.

² Reresby, p. 248 ; Bulstrode, p. 339.

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long depended on the City, and although the reaction spread rapidly over the country it yet hardly reached the metropolis.

A special commission of oyer and terminer sat to dispose of the charge against the accused peer. "'Tis expected that ye Bill of my Lord Shaft^y will be brought to ye grand jury on Thursday; but 'tis such a return of a jury that one can hardly expect anything but ignoramus from it." Sir Charles Lyttelton's surmise proved correct; the grand jury, carefully picked by the friendly sheriffs, rejected the indictment, and the foreman wrote "Ignoramus" across the back of the document, or, in modern parlance, returned "No bill."¹ The result of the verdict caused the greatest exultation in the Green Ribbon Club, hitherto somewhat depressed at the course of circumstances. "The people fell a helloing and shouting, much to the discomposure of the Attorney-General"; and unmistakably the verdict came as a joyful surprise both to Shaftesbury and his partisans, especially as, in the interval, the trial of College, who from his activity as a member of the club had gained the name of the Protestant joiner, resulted in the condemnation and execution of the accused.²

College—although, as in the case of his leader, a friendly London jury refused to bring in a true bill—by a legal manœuvre stood his trial at Oxford, where the treasonable words were spoken; and the remarkable sight could be seen of Dugdale, Turberville and one set of foresworn informers giving evidence on behalf of the prosecution, and Oates, Bolzon and the other array of perjurers swearing vigorously for the defence. College was hanged for treason; Oates, possibly for telling some portion of the truth, was deprived of his pension and driven from the lodgings hitherto provided for him at the expense of the public. It is gratifying to know that in this instance justice was done, though only to an inadequate degree.³

¹ Hatton, Vol. II., p. 9.

² "James' Life," p. 714.

³ State Trials; Bulstrode.

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The verdict of the grand jury in London "gravelled the court" more than any other event, for it demonstrated to the Government that, so long as the control of the City remained in Whig hands, the choice of juries would invariably be coloured by Whig politics. "It is a hard case that I am the last man to have law and justice in the nation," Charles exclaimed when the news of the "ignoramus" reached him; and then, characteristically, he turned the whole circumstance to his own advantage by taking steps to destroy the obnoxious influence.¹

A Tory alderman, Sir John Moore, in the autumn of 1681 secured election as Lord Mayor, and readily lent himself to the designs of the court. A very ancient custom existed in the City at the nomination of sheriffs, then a most important post entailing considerable expenditure upon the holder. The Lord Mayor on the day of election possessed the privilege of nominating one sheriff by publicly drinking to him; the livery invariably confirmed the nomination by acclamation, and then proceeded, in due course, to the election by the ordinary method of the second candidate for the shrievalty.

On this occasion and in this manner Sir John Moore nominated Dudley North, a brother of the Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas and a pronounced supporter of the court.

Contrary to custom the livery refused the nomination and put forward two candidates of their own whose election they secured. The outgoing sheriff, however, committed the mistake of holding the election without the consent of the Lord Mayor, who thereon refused to recognise the validity of the procedure. Consequently a series of irregular contests took place; elected candidates becoming disqualified others were put into their places, with the result that eventually two Tory sheriffs, North and Rich, secured election. The procedure was indefensible and arbitrary, the only possible excuse being that heretofore the Whig party used exactly the same tactics for exactly similar

¹ Aylesbury; Reresby, p. 249.

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ends, and their opponents felt justified in following the evil example.¹

But the result proved important. Shaftesbury saw that no longer could he rely on the City as his impregnable vantage ground; and, whether from despair of success by legitimate means or weakened by ill-health, he fell into courses frankly treasonable and rebellious. Mr. Christie, a very partial biographer, admits that steps were taken to organise an armed rising against the King in various parts of the country, Shaftesbury and Russell controlling the "brisk boys" in the City, Russell also influencing his friends in the West of England. Monmouth travelled through Cheshire under pretence of visiting Lord Macclesfield, but accompanied by troops of friends and enjoying acclamation and enthusiastic welcome wherever he went, his journey almost taking the form of a royal progress. Other conspirators worked in various counties, Sir William Courtenay being designated to lead Devonshire, and Mr. Trenchard promising to raise 1,500 men in Taunton.

Charles, probably to prevent his son making a fool of himself, caused him to be arrested at Stafford, brought to London and released on bail; upon this measure becoming known Shaftesbury left his house in Aldersgate Street and hid himself among the slums of the City. A few weeks later Monmouth, Lord Russell, Lord Grey, Sir Thomas Armstrong, Colonel Rumsey and the notorious Ferguson, known as "The Plotter," held a meeting at the house of a wine merchant named Shepherd. Here arrangements were made to foment an armed rising some eight or ten days later, and the special measures to be taken in London for this end were privately discussed.²

The rising never took place. At a second meeting of the same persons at the same place Trenchard reported that he could not be ready by the appointed day, and desired a postponement, whereupon Shaftesbury, fear of betrayal depriving

¹ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 347; North, "Examen," pp. 605 *et passim*.

² Ferguson, "The Plotter"; Christie, "Shaftesbury," Vol. II., p. 445.

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him of courage and resolution, abandoned his companions and fled to Holland.¹

There seems little doubt that for some lengthy period before these events he must have suffered from serious ill-health, for only two months after his flight, on the 21st January, 1683, he died in exile at Amsterdam.

His death in no way interfered with the plans of his co-conspirators—probably these were glad to be relieved from his continual interference ; but with his death disappeared the only antagonist to Charles's policy whom the King had genuine cause to fear.

With regard to subsequent events it is not altogether easy to accurately describe the details, but all accounts concur in stating that the plot for subverting the King's authority continued, and that Lord Russell took a prominent part, at least, in discussing the details necessary for putting it into execution.

At this time Charles, by means of the legal process, *quo warranto*, commenced an attack upon the ancient charter of the City of London and attempted to obtain its forfeiture. The irritation and discontent aroused among the citizens by this onslaught, which proved successful, seemed to afford a very opportune moment for prosecuting designs against the Government. A party of men—Walcot, Ferguson, West and Rumbold, all desperate characters—hatched a scheme by which the King and the Duke of York, lately returned from Scotland, might be murdered, on their way from Newmarket to London, as they passed through a narrow part of the road between the buildings of a malt-house, belonging to Rumbold, known as the Rye House.

Using Lord Howard of Escrick as a channel, communications were opened between these men and the prominent members of the Whig party, including not only Russell, Monmouth and Shaftesbury, but also Lord Essex, Lord Grey, Algernon Sidney and Mr. Hampden.²

That Lord Russell and Lord Essex were innocent of any

¹ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 352.

² Ferguson, "The Plotter" ; Burnet, Vol. I., p. 355.

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design against the life of the King, and probably were completely ignorant that a murder scheme existed, may be considered as indisputable. The superior genius of Shaftesbury led both of them, especially Russell, to take part in schemes which they only partially comprehended, for Russell, as Barillon states, "is not a genius ; he gained his reputation from the consistency with which he espoused the cause of the Popular party. He is closely allied to the Duke of Monmouth and Lord Shaftesbury."¹

Amid all the contradictory statements made on the subject, it is difficult to disentangle any distinct knowledge as to the amount of information which one set of plotters possessed of the designs of those others with whom undeniably they held communication. Shaftesbury's distrust of Monmouth led to the conception of the murder plot ; he might support a monarch and a monarchy for his own ends, but at heart he cherished hopes of a republic with himself as head. He had all to gain by Charles's death. Monmouth and others discussed plans for seducing the guards and seizing Whitehall ; if they succeeded in doing this, they must perforce dispose of the person of the King. What fate had they reserved for Charles ? Monmouth is reported to have declared with horror that he would never countenance any designs against the life of his father ; if this is true, such an assertion can only have been called forth by the knowledge that some reckless minds regarded the murder of the sovereign as the easiest solution of the problem.

Charles by an accident escaped the fate prepared for him. As Saville tells us, a fire having broken out in the King's apartments at Newmarket, to avoid discomfort Charles and his brother returned to London two days earlier than originally intended and thus eluded the conspirators who had laid their plans for a later date.²

The attempt failing, the usual sequence followed. One by one, distrustful of their colleagues, the whole crew hastened

¹ Christie, "Shaftesbury," Vol. II., p. 293, note.

² Saville Letters, p. 273.

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to turn King's evidence, West, Rumsey and Shepherd taking the lead.

Upon their information the Council issued orders for the arrest of the minor agents, but when the names of the Duke of Monmouth and the high Whig peers, Essex and Russell in particular, were mentioned, the authorities sent post haste to Windsor for the King. At the resumed sitting warrants were signed, Russell and Algernon Sidney sent to the Tower, where, shortly afterwards, they were joined by Essex, and rewards offered for the capture of Monmouth (at whose disappearance it was reported that the King connived), Lord Grey, Armstrong and Ferguson.¹

The latter escaped ; but " my Lord Brandon and young Mr. Hampden were both sent to the Tower and my Lord Howard of Escrick taken out of his house. He had concealed himself in his chimney ; so soon as he came to the King, he fell crying bitterly and desired pen and paper that he might recollect and disclose what he knew." ²

The testimony of this most despicable man supplied the evidence wanted to convict Lord Russell, against whom also Rumsey and Shepherd bore witness ; but perhaps, to the impressionable mind of the public at large, the most damning proof of the guilt of all the conspirators was provided by the sudden death, by his own hand, of Lord Essex, who, on the very day his most distinguished colleague stood for trial, cut his own throat desperately and was found dead in his chamber at the Tower.

Whatever may have been the moral innocence of Russell, it is perfectly clear that he consorted with men deeply immersed in treasonable practices and on certain occasions discussed in their company plans for subverting the King's authority.

The execution of Russell, which took place on the 21st July, 1668, has been made the occasion for more bitter attacks on the memory and conduct of Charles than perhaps any other action in his reign. Strenuous efforts were made

¹ Hatton, Vol. II., p. 22 ; Reresby, p. 276.

² Hatton, Vol. II., p. 27.

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to obtain mercy for the condemned nobleman, huge sums of money, so it is asserted, being offered to the King and the Duchess of Portsmouth, and earnest application made to the Duke of York to intercede, but without avail.¹

Blame cannot justly be attributed to Charles for his obduracy in this matter. It is quite plain that a design existed for creating an insurrection and subverting the Government, upon which possibly a plot was grafted for the assassination of the King ; but it is nonsense to cast upon a monarch the reproach of judicial murder, as most historians have done, because he failed to discriminate, as even now it is most difficult to do, between the would-be rebels who planned the insurrection and the would-be assassins who arranged the murder. Both met together more than once in the same meeting place ; it may have been, and probably was, the case that those who designed the rising did not approve or participate in the scheme to kill the King ; but it must be remembered that both sections intended to take up arms against the monarch, and under these circumstances the monarch can hardly be blamed for rendering any recurrence of such an event impossible. " If I do not take his life, he will soon have mine," was Charles's expressed reason for refusing a reprieve to Lord Russell ; logically he cannot be blamed for the action.²

By nature the most merciful King that ever occupied the throne of this country, the ease with which pardon for offences could be obtained from him became almost a byword at court ; as he himself once good-humouredly remarked to Lord North, " It is odd how all my friends seem to keep by them some tame rogue." Three witnesses testified against Russell ; and, regrettable in every respect as the premature death of such a right and liberal minded man must be, it cannot be fairly alleged that he suffered either unjustly or illegally.

In November the trial of Algernon Sidney commenced. Here again arises an opportunity for casting aspersion on

¹ Dalrymple, Part I., p. 121 ; Burnet, Vol. I., p. 362.

² *Ibid.*, p. 120.

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Charles, in this case perhaps with more reason, for although Sidney all his life professed anti-monarchical opinion (he nevertheless accepted a pension from Louis XIV.), yet such opinions partook very largely of a philosophical and doctrinaire character. Certainly Jeffreys, the presiding judge, unduly stretched the intention of the law by permitting certain incriminating writings of the accused to be received in evidence against him in the place of the second witness to overt acts required by the statute.¹

However much historians may minimise the objects of this Rye House plot, at the time it created great excitement both in the country and in the court. "The public are now in great consternation on the late plot and conspiracy, his Majesty very melancholy and not stirring without double guards, all the avenues and private doors about Whitehall and the park shut up, few admitted to walk in it."² Perhaps the melancholy of the King resulted from other causes than fear for his own person; there is abundant evidence to show that he felt very deeply the defection of the Duke of Monmouth, love for whom formed one of the tender spots in his heart. That foolish and unstable young man showed to small advantage throughout the whole sad business. Released on bail after his escapade in Cheshire, he disappeared at the time when the remainder of his associates became either prisoners or fugitives. Suddenly, to the surprise of the court and the disquiet of James, he reappeared at Whitehall, and every appearance pointed to a complete reconciliation with his father.³

The good offices of Halifax brought about this change, not so much from a desire to bring parent and child together as with the equal object of showing to James the possibility of future rivalry in the succession to the throne and the consequent necessity of conciliatory behaviour.

On being pressed, Monmouth corroborated to a certain extent the testimony of Lord Howard, and, at the King's

¹ State Trials.

² Evelyn, Vol. II., p. 191.

³ Reresby, p. 280.

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request—it was even said at his dictation—wrote a confession of his own offences and an account of the designs to which he had been party. The Duke of York, for the obvious purpose of damaging his rival's reputation, caused an entry to be made in the *Gazette* that the Duke of Monmouth had confessed his share in the plot and received the royal pardon accordingly. Irritated at this announcement, Monmouth, contrary to the advice of Halifax, retracted his statement and demanded from the King a return of the incriminating document. Angered and annoyed at the inconsistency of his son's conduct and doubtful of his good faith, Charles vehemently exclaimed to Halifax : "Give him his paper back again and let him go to H——." "This is authentic and to my certain knowledge," writes Bruce, and here he adds, "The King was never known to be in such a passion."¹

The discovery of the Rye House plot, and with it the frustration of the political hopes of Lord Russell and the extreme Whigs, closed the tempestuous portion of the reign of Charles II. No further internal troubles marred the serenity of his closing days. With consummate skill he fought the battle of the legitimate succession to the throne ; with imperturbable patience and good humour he yielded non-essentials and bore insult and disappointment until the popular reaction in his favour enabled him to overcome all opposition ; then so completely did he triumph that, on his own death, he ensured the peaceful possession of the crown to his brother James, notwithstanding the national detestation of that brother's religion and the widespread dislike of his political attitude.

If on ascending the throne James had shown but a modicum of the talents and gifts which Charles displayed in retaining it for him, the Stuart family might have earned more eulogistic treatment at the hands of historians than has been meted out to it.

¹ Aylesbury, p. 84

CHAPTER VI.

CHARLES : HIS COURT AND HIS COURTESANS.

WHEN a nation loses its self-control and indulges in excesses either of panic or violence, a period of strong reaction is inevitable.

The revelations of the Rye House plot, the proposed murder of the King and the dread of revolution so startled the minds of the people that they forgot their old fear ; the Popish Plot became a nightmare of the past, and the Protestant conspiracy, as some dubbed it, reawakened all the feeling of loyalty and devotion to the monarch which filled the nation at the Restoration.

With the national revulsion against the Popish Plot arose distrust of the party which fostered it. Although the Exclusionists met with disastrous defeat by the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament in 1681, Lord Halifax, a Whig, one, however, who saw the danger of diverting the succession to the throne from the rightful heir, continued to exercise considerable, if not paramount, influence in the King's Council. On his advice Charles consented to receive a visit from William of Orange, who by a personal interview hoped to regain the influence in the English court which he had lost by his uncompromising support of the policy of exclusion. William arrived, but by nature unflinching and even tactless, obsessed, moreover, with a virulent hatred of all things French, he totally failed to commend himself, or his cause, either to the King or the ministry, and only obtained a qualified promise that representations should be made to France with the object of restraining her from any overt aggression upon the frontiers of Flanders. With this exception his visit proved nugatory and he returned home after a very short stay in this country.¹

¹ Sidney Letters, Vol. II., p. 220 ; "James' Life," p. 690.

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The creators of the Popish Plot were now somewhat ashamed of their progeny. The cruelties inflicted on innocent men, suffering for no fault except their religion, not only began to arouse the sympathy of the English people, but also the indignation of continental Powers.

Henry Saville, the English ambassador at Paris, brother to Lord Halifax, wrote to Sir Leoline Jenkins that the speeches of the five Jesuit fathers, when condemned to death, "had a terrible effect heer people being so possessed against us upon the occasion"; and he recommends that "some very exact narrative of all that has passed be issued so as to convince the world our proceedings have not been soe barbarous as heer and everywhere southward they have been reported to bee."¹

So much did the feeling of anger increase, that, later, Saville informed Lord Sunderland that Louis had issued orders to Barillon to render an account of "the usage of the King's Roman Catholic subjects in England, that being the modell designed for what treatment the English Protestants shall find heer."²

The intention of Louis to avenge the wrongs of English members of the Roman Church on French Protestants produced an effect which ultimately conduced to the advantage of this country. Fearful for the liberty, if not the lives, of themselves and their children, these Huguenots proposed to come across the Channel in large numbers, and Henry Saville sends much interesting information concerning the desirability of facilitating the process of naturalisation, by means of which advantage might accrue to this country from the advent of men who would bring here the manufacture "of sayle cloath, so much needed in England."

The Rye House plot gave the last blow to the supporters of the Exclusion Bill, and the disgrace became complete of those politicians to whom the people attributed the enormities of the Popish Plot. Taking advantage of the reaction,

¹ Savile Letters, p. 112.

² *Ibid.*, p. 174.

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the ministry struck a blow at the strongholds of Whig influence.

The City of London having lost its charter, attempts were made throughout the country to compel the lesser municipalities to surrender their independence.

Following the advice given by Lord Essex, who, in regard to the disloyal Irish boroughs, advised forfeiture of the charters, steps were taken to carry out the plan in England, and by degrees nearly every considerable town in this country fell into subservience to the court.¹

Lord Halifax, in virtue of his office of Lord Privy Seal, was chiefly instrumental in bringing about this state of affairs, which, although undoubtedly arbitrary and high-handed, yet invaded the liberty of the subject less in reality than in appearance.

Most of these municipalities consisted of a small number of men who frequently formed the electorate which alone chose members of Parliament; consequently any party which obtained control of these associations was able to manipulate the whole of the representation of the smaller boroughs, whatever might be the real state of public opinion; the fact therefore that this power should be taken from powerful nobles and transferred to the Crown, to a minor degree only affected the liberty of choice of the greater part of the nation.

Since the discovery of the Rye House plot and the punishment of the conspirators, Charles gradually took a less active part in public affairs. If the diagnosis now put forward of the disease which caused his death is correct, and he fell a victim to a chronic affection of the kidneys, it is probable that as he felt his physical health breaking he lost interest in political matters. An old ballad speaks of "His face being wasted in most piteous sort," and indications of failing strength can be found in the records of his frequent illnesses.

Moreover, the cause for strenuous work no longer existed. The reaction against the Whigs and the Exclusionists set

¹ Essex Papers, p. 93; Reresby, p. 287.

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in with uncontrolled force ; the country reaped the benefit of his policy of peace and abstention from the warlike operations which devastated the Continent, and, with increased trade and augmented wealth, yielded to their King as absolute and loyal a devotion as in the year of his restoration.¹

But while the activity and influence of Charles diminished, the interference and ascendancy of James increased. Lawrence Hyde (soon to be created Earl of Rochester), Sunderland (now restored to favour through the intercession of the Duchess of Portsmouth), and Halifax, at this time, practically formed the ministry ; but the power of the latter waned day by day, and, for a period, James exercised almost unrestricted control.

It is characteristic of the obstinate and short-sighted policy of this prince that he rejected the advice urged on him by Halifax, Ormonde and Danby (now, at the instigation of Halifax, released from the Tower) to summon a new Parliament, and thus lost an opportunity of being assisted by a Legislature devoted to his interests, "for the body of the nation was yet so possessed with the belief in the plot, that probably all elections would have gone as the court directed, and scarcely any of the other party would have had the courage to have stood for an election anywhere."²

James remembered too well the action of the last House of Commons ; a true despot at heart, he meant as long as possible to control affairs according to his own will, and so gave a decided negative to the advice tendered to him. "In short, affairs were now under the management of the Duke of York, who carried everything with a very lofty hand."³

From a curious passage in Wellwood's *Memoirs* it may even be inferred that James acted as if in anticipation of his brother's death, and received addresses "as if he had been already king."⁴ In this he pursued the same course of con-

¹ Verney Papers, p. 268.

² Burnet, Vol. I., p. 367 ; Reresby, p. 235.

³ Reresby, p. 286.

⁴ Wellwood's *Memoirs*, p. 134.

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duct as during his last sojourn in Scotland, when, as Burnet relates, "it was visibly his interest to make that nation sure to him. For this purpose he showed a courtesy and friendliness not usually seen in his behaviour, and so conducted himself that the nobility and gentry, who had been so long trodden on by Duke Lauderdale and his party,"¹ welcomed the change and became staunch partisans.

Lauderdale died in August, 1682, having held the office of Secretary of State for Scotland for twenty years. In the northern kingdom, as in England, the question of religion dominated all others, and the disputes between Prelacy and Presbyterianism almost equalled in bitterness the warfare between Protestant and Papist in this country. The issues there, however, were not complicated by the question of succession to the throne, which caused such wide-reaching effect in England; indeed, so little did Scottish affairs affect the policy of the King and his ministers that, so far as the plans of England were concerned, the sister kingdom might not have existed at all.

On the Restoration Scotland desired to regain the independence wrested from her by Cromwell, and Charles willingly acceded to the request, against the advice of his councillors, who impressed on him that little reliance could be placed on the loyalty of either Parliament or people in the nation which sold his father to his death and treated himself, at the time of his deepest distress, with indignity and neglect.²

Yet, although Charles yielded to the desires of Scotland, he felt such intense dislike to the people and their customs, both religious and otherwise, that he never set foot in the country again, ruling it always through a commissioner who acted as the medium of the royal will.

At the beginning of his reign he left the management of affairs to Middleton, whose habits and those of his colleagues were such as to be handed down to posterity by the title given to the ministry of "The Drunken Administration"³;

¹ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 337.

² Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., pp. 92 *et passim*.

³ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 77.

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but, on Middleton's resignation, the Council formed at Westminster, to assist in keeping touch between the Scotch and the English Government, ceased to meet, and, on Lauderdale succeeding Lord Rothes in 1669, the whole weight of government fell upon the shoulders of the royal commissioner, as he then became, and on the King himself, who took much practical interest in Scottish affairs.

In 1663 Lauderdale wrote to Charles : " I am ravish't you govern this poor kingdom yourself " ; and in the same year the acute and learned Moray warned his friend the secretary : " You will find his Majesty does the business of Scotland not only alone, but with pleasure ; whereof you ought to take notice. . . . Not only is he informed fully of all passages, but no step advanced in new matter without his warrant." ¹

Charles himself believed in the importance of his personal share in governing the country, and once told his Council that he knew more of the affairs of Scotland than all of them put together. Whether or no his estimate of his own knowledge was just, he certainly found in Lauderdale a servant who worked hard and faithfully in the direction which he believed to be to his master's interest, and allowed no obstacle to stand in the way of a compliance with that master's wishes.

The remembrance of the subjugation in which the new Model Army kept both kingdoms never entirely left the mind of either the King or his followers. In all his financial troubles Charles always contrived to find money to pay his Guards, and at each convenient opportunity added somewhat to their number, although at no time did he have a numerous force at his disposal. When, on the occasion of war, troops were raised and supply voted by Parliament, the intense jealousy which this new army engendered, and the difficulty of obtaining funds sufficient to pay it, invariably hampered the King to such an extent as to show him the impossibility of ever gaining real military power.

¹ Lauderdale Papers.

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The success which attended Lauderdale's policy in Scotland, when he persuaded the Scottish Parliament to pass the Militia Bill, was so complete as to draw from Arlington the remark : " In one word and without flattery your Grace has played your part well, nothing but the proverb of ' *La mariée est trop belle* ' can be said against it " ¹ ; and if the passing of the Act of Supremacy and the raising of the militia produced the results described by the commissioner, Arlington's compliment was well deserved : " The first makes you sovereign in the Church, the other act settles you 20,000 men to make good that power, . . . who will march when and where you choose to command, for never was king so absolute as you are in poor old Scotland. " ²

Charles might be easy and placable by nature, yet such a declaration must have been grateful to him, and certainly hardened him in his determination to resist all the attacks which the House of Commons persistently made against the minister who placed so powerful a weapon in the hands of the sovereign.

Time after time the Commons demanded the removal of Lauderdale from the King's Councils, always to find that his Majesty's ingenuity found a way to meet their resolution with a negative which left them powerless though discontented. The complaint made by Halifax that Charles deserted his ministers cannot apply to his conduct towards Lauderdale, nor, in reality, towards anyone for whom he entertained personal liking. ³

Notwithstanding his coarseness of person and manners, Lauderdale won from the King both trust, which he deserved, and also some degree of attachment, the rough, pungent wit commending its owner to Charles, who liked brilliant talk. At the opening of the Scottish Parliament prayers were said by " the Bishop of Dunblane, for I would not have the Presbyterian trick of bringing in ministers to pray and tell God Almighty news from the debates. " Such caustic

¹ Arlington Letters.

² Lauderdale Papers.

³ " Parliamentary History, " p. 1130. See *ante*, Chapter IV.

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comments frequently sprinkle the correspondence of the minister ; and when, as in this case, they were combined with undoubted ability and unquestioned fidelity, they caused the services of the secretary who displayed the qualities to be retained by his master for practically the whole of the reign.

England, under Charles II., took but small interest in the affairs of Scotland ; she paid, however, somewhat more attention to those of Ireland.

Immediately after the Restoration, owing to the natural reaction, rents in England fell, and, as is generally the case in such events, the blame was laid on foreign competition and especially on Irish commercial rivalry. Consequently in 1665 Parliament brought forward a Bill prohibiting the importation of Irish cattle, 60,000 head of which, with an even larger number of sheep, arrived annually in this country.

The Bill passed, as did another stopping the importation of dead meat, to which trade Irish farmers betook themselves when debarred from the former business. Later a third enactment received the assent of the English Legislature, by which the transport of wool between the islands was also forbidden.

Lord Essex, at that time Lord Lieutenant, made urgent protests that such an Act would be most pernicious to England ; "for," he writes, "if this country [Ireland] be prohibited to carry wool into England, they must either vent it in foreign parts, or manufacture it at home ; either of which would be very apparently destructive to the manufacturers of England."¹

These prognostications proved true, and the English woollen trade suffered heavily from Irish rivalry, while an exceedingly bitter feeling arose between the two countries, a feeling further intensified as the effects of the proposed land settlement became apparent.

In Ireland, although the religious feeling existed, yet it took a latent form, the Protestant ascendancy of the

¹ Essex Papers, p. 64.

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settlers over the Roman Catholicism of the native inhabitants being so pronounced as to leave the latter but a small place in the national life.

Then, as now, the great problem of Irish government centred in the land ; then, as now, the vexed question of Irish land tenure comprised a mass of tangled complexities, by no means unravelled even to-day, in the twentieth century.

Cromwell endeavoured to solve it in his own way ; like so many men of blood and iron, he either went too far or not far enough. The logical termination of the Cromwellian policy would have terminated the whole difficulty by leaving none of the native Irish alive ; the partial solution left an irradicable grievance, which the lapse of centuries hardly seems to have ameliorated.

The " marvellous great mercy " by which the Protector slaughtered the inhabitants of Drogheda, Wexford and other places failed, however, to destroy all the natives of Ireland, so a different plan commended itself to the Commonwealth Government, who commanded all Roman Catholic landowners to remove and transplant themselves beyond the Shannon, into Connaught and Clare, before the 24th May, 1654. In addition to this drastic proceeding, the lands belonging to the Crown, the Church and those loyalists who supported the King were confiscated to the State.

About 35,000 Irishmen, rather than suffer these restrictions on their liberty, fled their native land and enlisted in foreign armies, forming those Irish brigades so distinguished for valour and daring ; but many thousands, accepting the tender mercies of their conquerors, gave up their own property and settled in the remote districts assigned to them.

The tracts of land thus relinquished were granted chiefly to two classes, called respectively adventurers, [or men who lent money for the purpose of providing funds to quell the Irish rebellion,—and then received territory in proportion to their subscription,] and soldiers, who, having

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conquered the native Irish, instead of the arrears of pay due to them were willing to accept a portion of the vacant holdings.¹

The majority of these two classes, politically, were advanced Cromwellians; but even when their claims had been lavishly settled a huge amount of land still remained at the disposal of the Government.

On the return of Charles to England, as restored king in 1660, the first question which pressed for settlement was the problem of the condition of Ireland.

The Government adopted the policy, wise in principle, of maintaining the existing conditions as far as possible, but, when the details came to be arranged, the slackness, corruption and jobbery which prevailed in every part of the national administration spread also to Ireland. Clarendon, with wonted discretion, refused to have anything to do with the matter, for he declared that out of Ireland "all debts were paid, all services rewarded, and all acts of bounty performed."²

As a bare acknowledgment of his invaluable services Ormonde received back all property of which the Commonwealth deprived him, and, after lengthy discussion, Charles issued a proclamation dealing with the whole question in a manner which the Government hoped might solve the difficulties. The Church and certain prominent Royalists—Orrery, Kingston, Massareene, and others—regained all their former estates. The adventurers and soldiers remained in possession of two-thirds of the holdings they possessed before 1660; all Protestants and "innocent papists," those who had not fought against the Crown since 1642, were also restored or given compensation, but the native Irish who had migrated to Connaught or Clare were held to have no claim to their previous property, a fruitful source of discontent in the future.³

This arrangement, though manifestly a compromise, in

¹ Clarendon, "Life," Vol. II., p. 112.

² *Ibid.*, p. 107.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 197 *et passim*.

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some measure might have solved the complex question if it had not failed in certain crucial particulars. From the commencement, doubts arose in the minds of the English settlers as to whether their previous Cromwellian proclivities might not prejudice them in the eyes of the restored Royalists, and whether the proposals would be final; as Essex wrote to Arlington: "I always find that the generality of the English who enjoy their estates upon the new titles cannot shake off their apprehension of losing them again."¹ Moreover, before long, it became apparent that the amount of land available for distribution and compensation was quite inadequate to satisfy all demands upon it, and although, after a while, the inhabitants of Ireland ceased to openly complain and accepted all they could get, yet in no way did the settlement appease any class of the community, but left that sense of injustice and unrequited wrong which still acts as a powerful incentive to Irish discontent.

Essex graphically describes the whole situation: "The truth is the lands of Ireland have been a mere scramble"²—in which pursuit, be it said, many people not entitled to a share filled their pockets to repletion.

James, Duke of York, received the property which the regicides formerly annexed to themselves—170,000 acres, more or less; and the royal mistresses, as might be expected, also claimed their proportion of the plunder, the grants to these ladies provoking much criticism.

Charles I. credited the English people with sobriety; in addition to that estimable quality, they also possess an innate conservative instinct which makes them cling to any custom or usage to which they may have become habituated. Some such traditional treatment appears to be attached to the reign of Charles II., and creates an expectation that writers on the events of that period will expatiate, at length, upon the charms and enormities of the many fair and frail accomplices who assisted the King in his alleged misdeeds.

Other Kings of England failed in fidelity to their marriage

¹ Essex Papers, Vol. I., p. 50.

² *Ibid.*, p. 201.



NELL GWYN.

After the Portrait by Sir Peter Lely.

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vows, yet historians have either passed over such peccadilloes in silence or contented themselves with a furtive thrust at the royal delinquent and the female partner of his back-sliding. Not so in the case of Charles Stuart; here a minute biography is expected of every lady upon whom he conferred his royal attention, however transitory may have been the connection or squalid the source from which she came and to which she returned.

With two exceptions, the first and the last, the mistresses of Charles played no part in public affairs and produced no practical effect upon the political action of this country, and the theory that the extravagance of his court accounted for the major portion of the national financial embarrassments is an assertion devoid of truth, although, doubtless, by cutting off this branch of his expenditure and by a more economical management of his resources, inadequate as they were, he might have avoided some of the pecuniary straits to which he frequently was reduced.

That "beautiful brown, bold, insipid creature,"¹ Lucy Walters, or Barlow, is the first name recorded as having acted as mistress to Charles; hints, however, can be found in contemporary authors that others before her may have occupied his attention temporarily.

Beautiful all writers represent Lucy Walters to have been; vicious and bad she certainly was. She fascinated Charles in 1648, when he had only reached the age of eighteen years, but before that time she lived with Colonel Robert Sidney, and to his paternity there is reason to believe may be attributed the child she bore, James Croft, afterwards created Duke of Monmouth.²

The name of this woman need not have been rescued from oblivion, if it were not that Charles, after his restoration, chose to acknowledge this young man as his son, to lavish favours upon him, and to place him in such a position that, being but poorly endowed with intellectual resources,

¹ Evelyn, Vol. I., p. 262.

² "James' Life," p. 492.

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he became the tool of the astute Shaftesbury, to be used as a pawn in the great game that ambitious intriguer played, and finally, when left to his own initiative, to fall a victim to the folly which led him to think that the people of England would accept such a one as himself for their rightful sovereign.

Regarding the career of his mother, her looseness of conduct became so notorious that Charles, although as long as possible he treated her liberally, at length was perforce obliged to sever all connection with her; expelled from Holland, imprisoned for a short time in the Tower by Cromwell, and then ejected from England, she fell into miserable circumstances, with the consequence, as James in his *Memoirs* brutally observes, that "she so abandoned herself in Paris that at last she died of the disease incident to that profession."¹

In dealing with the question of Irish land frequent reference can be found to Barbara Villiers, Lady Castlemaine, afterwards created Duchess of Cleveland, a domineering virago, who held sway over the easy-going King for many years of his life.

Of her loveliness there can be no doubt—the first woman of her age Reresby calls her, while the prurient Pepys admired her charms so greatly that he declares the sight of her "linnen petticoats with rich lace at the bottom did me good to look at them."²

"As for the beauties of the court," declares Grammont, "you could not look anywhere without seeing them." Charles, however bad his morals, had excellent taste, and in this respect differed entirely from his brother James who, quite as dissolute, chose indiscriminately the objects of his amours.

Charles, walking in the Mall one day, passed a very plain lady who looked consciously at him and then hurried away. "Who is that?" asked the King of his attendant. "That, your Majesty," answered the lord in waiting, in a low voice

¹ "James' Life," p. 492.

² Reresby, p. 167; Pepys, 20th May, 1662.

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of suitable decorum, "is the last lady friend of his Royal Highness your brother."

Charles turned and gazed after the retreating figure. "Odd's fish," at last he observed; "I really believe James has his mistresses given him by his confessor, as a penance."

The favours of beauty, however, must be paid for, and Lady Castlemaine proved a very expensive luxury. A passion for gambling caused her royal admirer much uneasiness. Personally he disliked losing even a small sum at tennis. Money to Charles was always hard to come by, and it is reported of him that he invariably looked troubled when, in the gallery at Whitehall, he saw any of his female friends tempting fate at basset. Experience told him that when they won they spent the money, when they lost he provided it. Pepys repeats scandals about Lady Castlemaine losing £25,000 at one time and £15,000 at another; all his tales are told second-hand, being the gossip of the playhouse or the backstairs, but sufficient evidence is forthcoming, from reliable sources, to show that the imperious beauty was grossly extravagant and insatiable for money to supply her pleasures.¹

But for the pertinacity and courage of Lord Essex, the Phoenix Park in Dublin, surrounding the residence of the Lord Lieutenant, would have been conferred on the Duchess of Cleveland, as she had then become, and only the bequest of a large tract of land elsewhere caused her Grace, and those who benefited by and through her, to relinquish the grant.²

Like most of Charles's mistresses, Barbara Villiers formed many other attachments. The daughter of the noble and gallant Viscount Grandison, who gave his life for the cause of royalty during the civil wars, at the age of eighteen she married Roger Palmer, of whom but little appears to be known but that he was a student at the Inns of Court, possessed a large fortune, was proficient in mathematics, and the inventor of a horizontal globe concerning which he

¹ Pepys, 14th February, 1668.

² Essex Papers, p. 58.

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wrote a pamphlet¹; likewise, being the husband of his wife, he became Earl of Castlemaine, and in the succeeding reign went as ambassador to the Pope to advocate the cause of James II., where, if rumour speaks truly, he managed affairs at Rome almost as badly as his master did in England.

It is reported of Lady Castlemaine, probably justly, that before her marriage Lord Chesterfield became the father of her eldest child, afterwards known as Lady Sussex; subsequently she showed the eclecticism of her taste by, in addition to her royal lover, intriguing with young Lord Jermyn, an empty-headed fop, Jacob Hart, the good-looking rope dancer, and John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, the soldier. At one time the wayward beauty wished to become a Roman Catholic; her friends applied to the King to use his influence to prevent her doing so. With rare presence of mind Charles, who knew her great impatience of contradiction, immediately replied: "I never meddle with the souls of the ladies."

Ungovernable and uncontrolled, as bad in temper as in morals, no sense of decorum or dignity ever restrained the conduct of Lady Castlemaine. The story is well known how, on Clarendon's disgrace, she ran to the window in her night-dress to jeer at the fallen statesman whom she hated. At another time, losing her temper on some fancied slight from the Duke of Ormonde, she cried out that she hoped "to live to see him hanged"; whereupon the haughty grand seigneur replied: "Madam, all I hope is to live to see you old"—a retort which may have borne a very deadly sting, for, according to Lord Dartmouth, the first intimation she received of her waning loveliness was hearing William Legge, an obsequious courtier, singing a popular refrain of the day: "Poor Alinda's growing old, her charms are now no more," which the lady, conscious of the covert truth, angrily applied to herself.

For years the arrogant beauty maintained her empire over the King, for awhile sharing it with her French rival, Louise de K  roualle; but at last both could not fail to see

¹ Granger's "Biographical History," Vol. III., p. 228.

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that a bright particular star was beginning to rise on the royal horizon, before which their more mature radiance would be sure to pale—that “wench of orange and oyster,” who even in the present day has a halo of fascination surrounding her name, that merry minx, Nell Gwyn, had captivated the easily captured heart of the Merrie Monarch.

Although industriously courted by the Whig party, for Nelly was a pronounced Protestant, except on one or two occasions when she pleaded for Monmouth, Nell Gwyn never troubled her head about politics; to amuse the King with her saucy wit, to tell the truth plainly and distinctly to his other mistresses in a manner no one else dared to imitate, and to stimulate the gaiety of the court by her own bright example and that of her “merrie gang” seems to have been her mission.

Piquant, *petite*, winsome and kind-hearted, beautifully shaped, with the smallest foot in England, the lines in Dryden’s epilogue express the opinion generally held of her :

“Sweet ladies ! be not frightened, I’ll be civil.
I’m what I was, a harmless little devil.”

It is to be doubted, however, whether her rivals in the King’s affection would quite have endorsed any such opinion of her harmlessness.

Madame de Sevigné, in one of her letters, gives a graphic description of the manner in which Nelly kept the Duchess of Portsmouth in order. The duchess enthralled the King—she thought she could get her own way in all things : “Mais elle n’avoit pas prévu de trouver en son chemin une jeune comédienne, dont le Roi est ensorcelé.” The little comedienne “thought quite as much of herself as the duchess, whom she mocks and at whom she makes faces. She is young, gay, reckless, free living and very good company. She sings, she dances, and has no nonsense about her. She has a son by the King and is anxious to get him recognised.”¹

¹ Madame de Sevigné, Letters, Vol. IV., p. 179 (11th September, 1675).

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Charles agreed to the latter request, and Nelly's eldest child obtained the coveted peerage, first as Earl of Burford, afterwards as Duke of St. Albans. The younger boy, commonly called James, Lord Beauclerk, died in Paris at the age of nine years.

Possibly from policy, probably from conviction, Nelly lived and died a devoted member of the Anglican Church ; one of the most frequently recounted anecdotes concerning her is that which relates how, being mistaken for the Duchess of Portsmouth and hooted as such by the mob, she told them that they were mistaken—she was the Protestant, not the popish, mistress, though, as a fact, she in her own individual idiom described the vocation of both herself and her rival by a more direct term.

Her Protestant profession brought many of the Country, or Whig, party, as it afterwards became, into direct communication with her. The Duke of Monmouth frequently visited her house in Pall Mall, and her sharp common sense soon divined the overweening ambition of the weak and foolish young man. To his face she called him " Prince Perkin " ; whereupon he angrily retorted that she was ill-bred. " Ill-bred ! " cried Nelly ; " pray, was Mrs. Barlow better bred than I ? "

During the time of her prosperity the warm-hearted little woman did not forget her old associates, but often assisted them and induced her royal lover to do the same ; yet rumour is false when it ascribes to Nell Gwyn that great act of kindly justice which is usually ascribed to her, the foundation of Chelsea Hospital.

Evelyn, in his Diary, describes how, dining with Sir Stephen Fox, he " proposed to me the purchasing of Chelsea College, to build an hospital or infirmary for soldiers there, on which he desired my assistance, as one of the Council of the Royal Society." ¹ Later there comes the more detailed intelligence ; " This evening Sir Stephen Fox acquainted me again with his Majesty's resolution of proceeding in the erection of a Royal Hospital for emerited soldiers ;

¹ Evelyn, Vol. II., p. 168.

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and I was further desired by Sir Stephen, who had not only the whole management of this, but was, as I perceived, himself to be a grand contributor."

One or two other references to the matter are made by Evelyn ; but in no way, either directly or indirectly, does he connect Nell Gwyn's name with the charity, although of course, it is possible that she used her influence with Charles to assist in the design. The origin of the idea, usually attributed to the sprightly and generous actress, in reality appears to have sprung from the more prosaic source of the paymaster to the forces, who, having made a large fortune out of soldiers when engaged on service, thought it not amiss to do something for their benefit when old and maimed.

Yet if Nelly is credited wrongly with establishing this excellent institution, with which her name has been long connected, many acts of charity were performed by her of which the world knows little or nothing. Few people attain a widespread reputation for either good or evil qualities without having done something to deserve it. Both in her own time, and for many years after her decease, the English people thought very kindly of Nell Gwyn, and so estimable a man as Archbishop Tenison preached her funeral sermon ; as Queen Mary, wife of William of Orange, justly said, " if she had not made a truly pious end the good doctor would never have been induced to speak well of her." She died in her thirty-seventh year, and left a large fortune, chiefly in plate and jewels.¹

Honoré Courtin, a skilled diplomatist, came to England in 1676 for the second time, he having visited this country some ten years previously. Being a Frenchman and a diplomat he in no way neglected the ladies, especially those about the court who could influence the King.

In common with all his colleagues, he wrote voluminous reports to Louis, relating not only to matters of political, but also of social interest.

¹ Cunningham, "Story of Nell Gwyn."

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In one despatch he describes the meeting of three ladies concerning whose doings much speculation existed at the French court. One day Louise de K roualle, Duchess of Portsmouth, called upon the Duchess Mazarin, and while there Lady Hervey entered accompanied by a charming young friend. Compliments passed between the ladies, and the young friend, who was called Miss Nelly, received many congratulations on the fact that her son had just been recognised by King Charles and created Earl of Burford.

All three ladies possessed a tender interest in their sovereign, and the hostess in whose apartments they met might, if her uncle could have more clearly foreseen events, have become Queen of England and legitimate wife of the King, Charles II.¹

Hortensia Mancini, the niece of Mazarin, met Charles during his first stay in France. Heiress to her uncle, the cardinal minister of Louis XIV., her dowry proved as great a bait to the queen mother, Henrietta Maria, as the lovely girl herself was an attraction to the young prince. But old Mazarin politely rejected the offer : he saw no prospect of better fortune for the exile. The terrible Cromwell stood in the way, and dominated not only England, but the continent of Europe also.

The cardinal thought better of the project ten or eleven years later, when, the Protector being dead, the restoration of the Stuarts appeared inevitable ; then the wily Italian pressed on Charles the hand of his niece, accompanied with a splendid dowry, together with the promise of troops and money sufficient to ensure success to the Royal cause.

This time Charles himself refused ; his treatment by France and Spain gave him small reason for wishing to conciliate either Government. His eyes and those of his wise and patient councillor, Hyde, were fixed on the inscrutable Monck, who did not fail them, and, as history testifies, the restoration was effected without the shedding of one drop of blood or the aid of a single foreign soldier or piece of money.

¹ Clarendon, " Rebellion."

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Happily for Charles he did not marry the beautiful Italian. He liked his ease ; she certainly would not have given him a quiet life. Her wayward frolics, her reckless improprieties, offended even the indulgent court of Louis XIV. Married to a man old enough to be her father, pious enough to be her confessor, she put up with his eccentricities for six years and then, only aged nineteen, left his roof and commenced a series of adventures as fantastic, wanton and harebrained as history has ever recorded.

“ This famous beauty and errant lady, all the world knows her story,” says Evelyn ; after wandering over half Europe, “ proclaiming her own and her husband’s shame,” at last came to England, “ then the home of all ladies who had quarrelled with their husbands,” according to Courtin.

Here, at the age of twenty-nine, she found herself at the court of her quondam admirer Charles, and, although no longer in the full splendour of her radiant southern beauty, she still retained sufficient charm to render herself a very dangerous rival to the somewhat faded graces and well-used attractions of Louise de K  roualle. The enemies of that lady seized the opportunity, and, for political purposes, endeavoured to supersede her influence by that of the new-comer.

For a time they appear to have succeeded ; Charles temporarily renewed his attachment to his old love, and saucy Nell Gwyn dressed herself in deepest black, mourning, so she said, for the dead hopes of poor Louise ; but the cleverness and discretion of the latter, combined with the wild folly of the Duchess Mazarin, soon restored the power of the French enchantress.

The cardinal is reputed to have left his niece a million and a half pounds sterling, a prodigious sum in those days ; but the duchess managed to spend it, a feat not to be wondered at if she often indulged, as she tells us occasionally she did, in flinging handfuls of gold pieces out of the window into the street in order that she might enjoy the amusement of seeing the people scrambling for them. Now she wanted money, and begged Charles to give her an allowance, to which he

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consented and tried his best to induce his cousin Louis to contribute also.

The air of England suited Hortensia. Her wanderings made her thin ; here her figure regained its original beauty, so much that her admirers declared that at the age of thirty she looked like a well-shaped girl of sixteen.

Her charm of conversation and the art of entertaining, which she possessed in a high degree, rendered her house the rendezvous of the best and brightest of both sexes, who attended the duchess's receptions, and gambled, made love, intrigued, talked politics and scandals as best suited their idiosyncrasies.¹

But Madame Mazarin required variety, and so fell desperately in love with the Prince of Monaco, which Charles resenting, the discreet Louise once more resumed her sway.

It is difficult to estimate exactly the position which Louise de K roualle occupied in the royal establishment. A most significant remark of Halifax—"There is a great difference between being muffled (blindfold) and being tied"—seems to imply that while, at times, Charles's mental vision might be obscured by the attractions of the mistress, by her long connection with him and her position as the intermediary between himself and France, yet he did not allow her influence to restrain his actions when he wished to assert his independence.²

This view is certainly borne out by events. That the French court designed Mademoiselle de K roualle to act as a secret emissary is undoubted ; that Charles used her as such is equally certain. "Her chamber," says Halifax, "was the true cabinet council, and there was more real business done there in his politic than in his personal capacity, and there was the *French part of the Government* [the italics are Halifax's], which was not the least."³ Yet there are distinct indications that Louise, in great matters, acted as the subordinate and not the principal.

¹ *Memoirs of the Duchess Mazarin.*

² Halifax, p. 350.

³ *Ibid.*

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Charles adopted the policy of alliance with France because in every way it commended itself to his intelligence and to his convenience, national and personal. By it he carried out his commercial objects ; by it he kept the country at peace ; by it he filled his pockets, which his own Parliament intended to keep empty. He pursued this policy because, for many reasons, he desired to do so ; but he initiated the design before he met with de Kéroualle, and he continued to use it in his own way despite her opposition to his wishes. More than once—Lord Stafford's trial is an instance—the King and the mistress were ranged on different sides, and in the long battle concerning the exclusion of his brother James and the rightful succession to the throne, a question on which Charles showed all his best qualities of courage and determination, Louise de Kéroualle, "Madame Carwell," hated by the people, fearful for her own safety, tried by all means in her power to change the conduct of the King, and tried in vain.

Her long dominion over Charles is accounted for by her tact. Castlemaine, when disappointed, stormed, Louise wept. Charles, an easy-going man, liked quiet, and he got it in the chamber of the de Kéroualle.

She seems also to have displayed many qualities, refinement in taste, a love of the beautiful, and a general liking for art, which touched a consonant chord in Charles's character. Like all ladies of her vocation, she showed a great desire for jewels ; probably the uncertainty of their fate causes them to like portable valuables. Whatever may have been the reason, she amassed many costly trinkets.¹

"She bought a necklasse of pearles £8,000 price of a marchant and a payre of diamond pendants, 3,000 guynezes of elder Lady Northumberland, but neither of them would part with them without ready money. I left Treasurer and the aforesaid persons in treaty and I suppose they are both able to make their bargains."

It is reasonably to be expected that they were able to do

¹ Essex Papers, p. 199.

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so, for the duchess contrived to extract large sums of money from the King. Some of it probably came out of the French subsidies, but she obtained heavy amounts from the Civil List,¹ and although, taking into consideration the difficulties under which the country suffered, the sums given were not in themselves sufficient to cause the financial embarrassment of the Government, yet in the existing condition of affairs such costly expenditure on such worthless objects was, in itself, indefensible, and, by blinding opinion to the real intention of his policy and actions, contributed largely to the evil reputation which Charles has attained.

If the Duchess of Portsmouth showed great extravagance in living, she also exhibited considerable taste in her manner of displaying it, and not a little assisted in producing a more general sense of refinement and a desire for greater daintiness in the surroundings of life.

The description Evelyn gives of her apartments at Whitehall vouches for the fact that the occupant must have been a woman of artistic discrimination :

“ Here I saw the new fabric of French tapestry, for design, tenderness of work and incomparable imitation of the best painting beyond anything I had ever seen. Then for Japanese cabinets, skreens, pendule clocks, great vases of wrought plate, tables, stands, chimney furniture, scones, branches, *braseras*, etc., all of massy silver and out of number besides some of her Majesty’s best paintings.”²

At this time the English court stood pre-eminent for its elegance and gaiety. De Lionne, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, sent his son, the Marquis de Berni, over to this island to learn “ *savoir-faire* ”—how to behave, the polite manner, and the various accomplishments necessary for a fine gentleman; how to make love, wisely and not too well, this required considerable training, and the court of Charles afforded many facilities for acquiring the art.³

¹ “ Secret Service Money ” (Camden Series).

² Evelyn, Vol. II., pp. 108, 197.

³ Jusserand, p. 153.

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The lovely ladies depicted by Lely, those "nymphs generally reposing upon turf who are too wanton and too magnificent to be taken for anything but maids of honour," as Walpole remarks; the fair Jennings, Hamilton, Stewart, and others, by their charms and their actions, fascinating if too unrestrained, formed a court which, with all its patent immorality, yet possessed much magnificence in appearance and some brilliancy of intellect.

Courtin, the French ambassador, a critical judge in all things feminine, noted the great improvement in female dress since his first visit to England earlier in the reign. He goes into raptures over the shoes, silk stockings, with other appurtenances of black velvet with diamond buckles, of which he occasionally obtained a glimpse; and cannot praise too highly the feet and ankles of the English ladies, "so well shaped that a sculptor would like to mould them."

He can hardly find words to express his admiration of the petticoats of Nell Gwyn, and declares that never in his life did he see such "through cleanness, neatness and sumptuosity" as in the garments which the fair actress displayed to him.¹

It is to be feared that the praise in this direction, which the mistress appears to have well earned, could hardly be accorded to the King; for if Pepys is to be believed, he one day heard Mr. Ashburnham, the groom of the bed-chamber, "horridly berating the wardrope" man, "the King having at this time no handkerchers and but three bands to his neck." The wardrope man pleaded that the linendraper was already owed £5,000, but afterwards confessed to Pepys it was the groom's taking away the King's linen at the quarter's end which occasioned this neglect of the King's person.²

Perhaps owing to his lack of linen, Charles believed in the virtues of flannel, for when Courtin ruefully complained of the vagaries of the English climate, which he said would

¹ Fourneron, "Louise de Kéroualle," pp. 161, 178.

² Pepys, 2nd September, 1667.

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kill him, Charles, with kind condescension, recommended him to wear a flannel waistcoat—"a plain suit of wollen stuff made in the cottages of Wales; they can be washed, the King told me, like linen shirts, and nothing could be more warm, comfortable and conducive to health."¹

With his usual good taste Charles tried to reform the excesses in male costume introduced by the French fashions. For a short time he dressed his court in black coats "pinked with white." As he remarked, however, they looked "too much like magpies," so the fashion reverted to the more elaborate toilettes of the Court of Louis XIV.; but the British King himself wore plain clothes when possible, and, as one of his portraits shows, habited himself in a simple black velvet suit decorated only with the Garter and the George.

The sense of refinement, now commencing, manifested itself in other material ways. Delicacies in food, elegance in vintages, succeeded to the coarse profusion of earlier days.

"The English are not very dainty, and the greatest lords' tables, who do not keep French cooks, are covered only with large dishes of meat. They are strangers to bisks and potages, their pastry is coarse and ill baked, their stewed fruits and confectionery ware cannot be eat, they scarce ever make use of forks or ewers," complains Mons. Samuel Sorbière;² and apparently de Grammont holds the same opinion. On one occasion he attended Charles when, according to usual custom, the King dined in public. The various courses were handed by attendants, who knelt when they offered the dishes. "You see," observed the King, "I am always served from the knee." "Ah! your Majesty, forgive me," rejoined the witty Frenchman; "I thought they were asking pardon for a bad dinner."

Of what the repast may have consisted we know not; perhaps it resembled the feast given by John Verney, on the occasion of his wedding, at the Rising Sun Tavern in

¹ Fourneron, p. 190.

² Sorbière's *Journey*.

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Queen Street, London, of which the bill, both of fare and cost, has been recorded :¹

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Beer, ayle	0	3	0	A dish of peeze	0	6	0
Wine	0	11	0	8 harty chokes	0	5	0
Orings	0	1	0	A dish of strabreys	0	6	0
A dish of fish	1	0	0	A dish of chereys	0	5	6
2 geeze	0	8	6				
4 fat chickens	0	8	0				
2 rabets	0	3	0				
					£3	17	0

Much information can be gathered from the pages of Pepys concerning the food and drink of the period, and incidentally of his own greediness, as shown on the occasion when, the host and guests being called away by the sudden visit of the King, "I staid and had a little dish or two to myself." ²

Yet from Lady Hatton's remarks to her husband that she wished to get everything "pretty handsome against my Lord Manchester's coming," her injunctions concerning the Rhenish and sherry sack, the "Westphaily" ham, neats' tongues, chocolate, oysters and pickles,³ it was evident that progress was being made in the direction of variety and taste ; while the letter St. Evremonde writes to a friend about this period gives proof positive of great proficiency in the art of the gourmet :

"Spare no cost to secure the wines of Champagne even though you are 200 leagues from Paris. Those of Burgundy have lost all their credit with men of good taste. If you ask me which of all these wines I prefer, without being swayed by the fashion, which has introduced a false delicacy, I maintain that Vin d'Ay is the most wholesome, the most natural and of the most exquisite agreeableness ; the peach taste which is peculiar to it and is in my opinion the chief of all taste."

St. Evremonde, an assiduous admirer of Madame Mazarin, then gives a lengthy and learned disquisition on the choice

¹ Verney Papers.

² Pepys, 14th April, 1663.

³ Hatton Correspondence, Vol. I., p. 148.

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of food, and ends his gastronomic epistle with the following, doubtless, excellent advice :

“ If you are obliged to be at a neighbour’s public treat, you may *commend* the hare, the stag, the roe buck, the wild boar, but *eat none of them* ; of all brown meats the snipe is alone to be commended in favour of its taste.” ¹

Such suggestions might commend themselves even to Henry Saville, who declared that he had no desire to come to England until we had “ less politics and better wine.”

Two luxuries appeared in England about this time which, very popular at their introduction, have remained in public favour ever since. Courtin sent, as a special rarity, to de Lionne some bars of chocolate, then newly arrived, which the Foreign Secretary tried to cook with eggs, until the Spanish ambassador kindly transmitted the proper method of boiling with water and sugar.

Catherine of Braganza, poor woman, brought very little to this country except the ugly ladies of her train and a few Portuguese priests ; but she deserves grateful remembrance if only for the fact sung by Waller :

“ The best of queens and best of herbs we owe
To that brave nation who the way doth show ” ;

in this instance, to the use of tea, without which it would be difficult now for our national or our social life to exist.

Pepys, also, talks of little fat ortolans brought from Bordeaux which he saw on the King’s table, an incident which shows that Charles’s taste must have changed since the day when he offended Mademoiselle de Montpensier by preferring beef and mutton to the exquisite little birds.

Record can be found, showing the cosmopolitan taste of the times, of a special entertainment at the Spanish ambassador’s where the food was excellent but served in the Spanish manner : “ Ollas make the first course, fruit the second, and roast the third. He has a butler who knows how

¹ St. Evremonde, “ Works ” (Letter to Mons. d’Olonne).

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to make a liquid blanc mange that is greatly esteemed and is drunk as lemonade.”¹

All these repasts appear to be more elaborate than were necessary to satisfy certain of Charles's older courtiers, for a correspondent writing to John Verney warns him: “If Ormonde do chance to come to you, a byled leg of mutton is his beloved dish for dinner.”²

The French mistress, it is to be feared, introduced many extravagant customs into England, but in one particular, at least, this country continued to follow its old habits. In France inordinate drinking was the exception; in England, unfortunately, the rule; few men after dinner being in a condition to converse sensibly or to transact business.

On one occasion the King dined with the Mayor and Corporation of the City of London; they drank his health on their knees, wishing themselves “hanged and damned” if they did not serve him faithfully.

The Guards, having been also hospitably entertained, were not considered by the aldermen sufficiently sober to escort the King home,—what the Guards thought of the aldermen has not been recorded—so the members of the Corporation themselves discharged that duty, marched to Whitehall with the monarch, and then “all went merrie out of the King's cellar.”

Two persons appeared to have benefited by the visit, Monsieur de Pontac, the King's wine merchant—if he were paid for his goods, not always the case,—and the Lord Mayor, who, before this occasion considered an ill-affected person, afterwards became so effusively loyal as to be received into high favour.

When Charles required a change of scene or an escape from the business of government, frequently he went to Newmarket. The old lodge there, erected by James I., had been destroyed, so Charles bought a house from Lord Thomond and built additional rooms on to it, though with but poor results, Duke Cosmo of Tuscany, who visited him

¹ Jusserand, Appendix, p. 242.

² Historical MSS., Verney Papers.

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there, declaring that in no respects did it deserve the name of a royal residence ; still, the "ayre being very good," the pursuit of health and pleasure could be maintained at the same place.¹

Occasionally, when the races were being run, thousands of visitors thronged the town ; many guests, chiefly courtiers and their friends, stayed there, and then "the jolly blades raced, danced, feasted and revelled" in such a manner as to invite the censure of the gentle Evelyn.²

Charles may have taken his share in the entertainments, but frequently his life, especially during the later period, was quiet and healthful : "Our life is so regular that it is not interrupted by any accidents. The mornings are spent on horseback, the afternoons at cock matches, the evening taking the air, the nights at cards"³—such is Henry Saville's description of his visit, and Lord Conway, who also stayed there, says that the King retired to his chamber every night at 9 o'clock.

Charles was a great patron of the Turf ; he not only owned and bred horses, but he rode them himself and rode them well. Naturally a fine horseman, who knew and judged a horse thoroughly, to his knowledge the country is indebted for the royal stud, the blood stock from which the best English horses have been derived.

In every way the connection of Charles II. with the Turf was conducive to its prosperity. He kept a large stable, the names of his horses being printed among the State Papers. Evelyn tells us of a race between "Woodcock" and "Flatfoot," when the former horse, which belonged to the King, lost. "The Cork," "Blew Capp" (a noted and "topping" winner), "The Mouse," and "Postboy" were all fine and successful animals ; the King himself occasionally rode them, at other times Peter Alibode, George Horniblow, William Bungay, and John Smith acting as his jockeys, their pay being sixpence a day, board and lodging free—even

¹ "Travels of Cosmo III."

² Evelyn, Vol. II., p. 72.

³ Saville Letters, p. 271.

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allowing for the proportionate increase in the value of money, not an exorbitant rate when compared to what the same class earns to-day.¹

"On Tuesday, November 23, 1676, the King and the jockeys met at supper at Ned Griffin, where were made six horse matches for £500 a match to be run at Newmarket next meeting"; and five years later comes the like intelligence: He [the King] supped last night at the Duke of Albemarle's and all the jockeys with them in order to make some horse matches."²

As early as the 7th March, 1661, Charles held a race meeting at Banstead Down, and followed that up by almost continuous patronage of the races at Newmarket. The accommodation of the royal residence was meagre and inadequate; but the royal stables, both in their building and management, contained all things requisite for the sport, much to the admiration of the old Duke de Verneuil, who informed his friends that the very stables were wainscoted and sculptured, while the horses were exercised daily and fed on new-laid eggs and Spanish wine.³

Newmarket supplied other amusements besides racing. Duke Cosmo called on the King early in the morning, but found that his Majesty had already left Newmarket on foot to take exercise, so the foreign guest followed. "He had not gone many paces before he met his Majesty, who returned home, in a plain and simple country dress without finery, but wearing the badges of the order of St. George and the Garter." After dinner the King, the Duke of York, and Prince Rupert played tennis, while the visitor went in pursuit of birds "called dotterel." Next day the whole party "renewed the diversion of hare-hunting, the great pleasure of which in this plain country is, that being entirely free from trees it leaves the huntsman the full enjoyment of seeing the animals without interruption. After the racing, which took place in the afternoon, the

¹ "History of the Turf," p. 91.

² Historical MSS., Verney Papers.

³ Jusserand, p. 162.

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King, being very much heated, adjourned to his house, . . . but having rested a little, went out again on foot and took a walk through Newmarket and to a short distance out of the town.”¹

Charles's love of walking seems to have communicated itself to members of his suite. “Your neighbour Digby did upon a wager of £50 undertake to walk, not to run a step, 5 miles on Newmarket Common in an hour, but he lost it by half a minute, but he had honour of good company, the King and all his nobles to attend to see him do it stark naked and bare foot”²— a description amended by Dr. Denton, who corroborates in all particulars except that he credits the runner with wearing a “breech clout.”

The ladies often found amusement in going to fairs and merry-makings, frequently disguised or in masks. At one time a new French contrivance of wooden horses, which were made to go round and to move up and down by machinery, proved a very popular pastime, until a woman fell off these roundabouts, as probably they were, and was killed ; then the popularity waned.

Bazaars and rose days were unknown in the seventeenth century ; those younger members of the court and aristocracy, therefore, who wished to display their charms and enterprising effrontery were obliged to disguise themselves as orange, not flower, girls, and in that attire sell the fruit to the gallants who paid both for the wares and the interviews.

Dancing and gaming provided the staple occupation for the evening ; the beautiful but vacuous Miss Stewart, however, preferred blindman's buff and building card castles. There is abundant testimony to show that gambling formed one of the great vices of the times, and although Charles himself rarely played, yet the greater part of his household gambled heavily and lost large sums of money. Evelyn's picture of the Court is well known :

“I shall never forget the inexpressible luxury, profaneness, gaming and all dissoluteness. . . . I was witness of

¹ “Travels of Cosmo III.”

² Historical MSS., Verney Papers.

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the King sitting and toying with his concubines, Portsmouth, Cleveland and Mazarin, a French boy singing love songs in that glorious gallery, while about twenty of the great courtiers and other dissolute persons were at basset round a large table, a bank of at least £2,000 in gold before them.”¹

¶ The attraction which the gaming table exercised over the courtiers, the theatre supplied to the King.

With a love for poetry, an ear for music, and some literary ability, Charles combined a perfect passion for the stage. Before his reign the sovereign, when he wished to see a play, immediately had it performed in some portion of his own palace or residence. Charles gave patents for the erection of two theatres—the “King’s” in Drury Lane, under the management of Thomas Killigrew, the celebrated wit and groom of the bedchamber; the other, the “Duke’s,” controlled by Sir William Davenant, the poet laureate, in Portugal Row, Lincoln’s Inn; this latter place of amusement being patronised chiefly by the “Cits,” as Pepys, being a tailor’s son, scornfully calls the tradesmen of London.

Charles patronised these houses not only theoretically but practically; he attended in person the production of new plays and took an active part in managing the company, judicially considering the personal and professional complaints of the actors and actresses.

He gave advice to playwrights and poets, recommending to them new plots and fresh styles of composition; in short, he encouraged and assisted the dramatic art by every means in his power.

The King did not confine his patronage only to English plays and players, although to these he gave his best attention; on one occasion at Whitehall there was acted a “French opera but most pitifully done, so ill that the King was a weary of it. . . . Some say it was not well contrived to entertain the English gentry, who came that night in honour to the King, with a lamentable ill acted French play, when the English actors so much surpass; however the dancing and the voices were pretty well performed.”²

¹ Evelyn, Vol. II., p. 220; *ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 35.

² Historical MSS., Verney Papers, p. 77.

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At other times Charles witnessed and encouraged the production of foreign plays, and took especial delight in the performance of Signor Scaramucio and his Italian troupe, who, so Evelyn admits, were "the most excellent of that kind of folly." A little difficulty, however, occurred in the engagement of these entertaining personages. "Scaramucio would like before he comes to England to have some money in hand, and also the £100 old debt paid"; a good many people in the reign of Charles II. felt the latter desire, which, not infrequently, remained unsatisfied.¹

The great interest Charles took in the theatre, the greater interest he took in the ladies who appeared in it, caused an abiding scandal to those of his subjects who still held Puritan principles :

"He spends all his days in running to plays,
When he should in the shop be poring,
And he wastes all his nights in his constant delights,
Of revelling, drinking and w——g";

is the bitter stanza of Andrew Marvell.

The unbounded indulgence in all amusements which suited his taste, his licentious immorality, displayed with hardly a vestige of concealment,—these vices have given Charles II. his place in the opinion of the majority of his countrymen, and have closed their eyes to the many fine qualities he possessed, to the object and intention of the policy he pursued, and the strength and determination he exhibited in doing so.

Though in his leisure hours Charles devoted much of his time to light and frivolous amusements, more serious occupations often employed him.

From the stage to the pulpit is a natural transition. Charles in "that strong laconick way of expression" and "gentle, easy polite way of writing," as Dr. Wellwood depicts it, admirably sums up one aspect of the case in a delightful letter he once wrote to his sister Henriette :

"We have the same disease of sermons that you complain of, but I hope you have the same convenience the rest of the

¹ Historical MSS., Verney Papers, p. 286

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family has of sleeping out most of the time, which is a great ease to those who are bound to hear them.”¹

Charles suffered from sermons all his life ; from the day, when, at Oxford, his severe father corrected him for laughing at the ladies during sermon time ; then later when, on his way to join his mother in Paris, good Mr. Scott “entertained him with a sermon suitable for his condition ;”² until the awful ordeal of his sojourn in Scotland, when, the covenanting divines preaching at him ceaselessly, in season and out of season, he endured a succession of theological discourses which might have excited the spleen of a less worldly-minded man than Charles Stuart.

No wonder he cultivated the “family convenience” to a very high degree. South, a most eloquent preacher, one Sunday stopped in the middle of his discourse and, addressing the Duke of Lauderdale, exclaimed : “My lord ! my lord ! you snore so loudly you will wake the King.”

And yet it must not be thought that Charles only regarded sermons and such like discourses as an occasion for somnolence, or as a disease to be endured as patiently as needs be. A most curious passage can be found in Burnet. After relating that Tillotson, Stillingfleet and Patrick contributed “more than can well be imagined” to reform the way of preaching in England, that the common style of sermon “was either very flat and low, or swelled up with rhetorick to a false pitch of a wrong sublime,” he continues :

“The King had little or no literature but true and good sense, and had got a right notion of style, for he was in France when they were much set on reforming the language. It soon appeared that he had a true taste ; so this helped to raise the value of these men when the King approved of the style their discourses generally ran in.”³

It is no mean praise to admit that the critical support of Charles assisted such men as Tillotson and Stillingfleet

¹ “Madame,” p. 228.

² Aurelian Cook.

³ Burnet, Vol. I., p. 131.

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to improve the standard of public preaching ; and it is but another instance of the contrarieties which lay in all parts of his complex nature.

He bore personal attacks with good humour and equanimity so long as the limits of good taste were observed.

Dr. Frampton preached a strong sermon directly at the King, who, after the affliction, said to the gentleman in waiting : " Tell Doctor Frampton that I am not angry to be told of my faults, but I would wish it done in a gentleman like manner." ¹ When Burnet addressed to him a scathing letter, " setting before him his past life and the effects it had on the nation, with the judgments of God which lay on him and which was but small part of the punishment he might look for," Charles read the epistle over twice, and, although he then threw it in the fire, yet within a very short time he received the writer with kindness and courtesy, so much so that Burnet himself says " I was in favour again."

Ormonde, who knew Charles intimately from his youth up, declares that he was not wanting either in a sense of religion or in a belief in the vital principles of God's mercy to sinners, —indeed, he seems to have carried the latter doctrine to a very wide extent ; and North, equally well acquainted with him, asserts that Charles was never profane in his language ; " no man in this world kept more decorum in his expressions and behaviour with respect to things sacred." ²

If these testimonies are true,—they came from men who knew him well—the contradictions between his belief and his mode of life are no greater than between his intellectual qualities and many of his pursuits. The airy monarch who shook with laughter at Nell Gwyn and her cart-wheel hat founded the Royal Society, and took a personal and intimate interest in science.

Monsieur Samuel Sorbière, a man of considerable attainments who visited England in 1663, expresses himself as astonished at the knowledge of science to which the King had attained, and gives an account of the very fine laboratory

¹ Aylesbury Memoirs, p. 7.

² North's " Life of the Norths "

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built in St. James's Park, "with a full pile to make use of telescopes. But more particularly his Majesty takes great delight in finding out useful experiments in navigation, wherein he has immense knowledge. He ordered my Lord Brounker while I was in London to try some sorts of timber and what form would swim best in water or easiest sink." ¹

Charles also took interest in works of art. "Those precious treasures and curiosities" which, in Evelyn's opinion, could be made as "famous as the cabinet of the Duke of Florence, his Majesty himself being as exquisite a judge as well as proprietor of as many rare things as might render not only Whitehall but the whole nation famous for it abroad" ²; and to the encouragement he gave in this direction may be attributed the introduction of many useful and ornamental crafts, which contributed to the civilisation and education of the country.

The Duke of Buckingham imported makers, grinders, and polishers of glass from Venice, the trade very soon being brought to great perfection. Goldsmiths and silversmiths, then in great request at court, produced many beautiful examples of their art, as the salt-cellar, value £500, presented to the King by the city of Exeter testifies; and in other branches of industry this country seems to have asserted its position, a quaint instance occurring in a letter written by his sister to Lord Hatton: "It enters my mind to ask you if you have any English steel pens; they assure me neither glass pens nor any other sorts are neare soe good." ³

It should also be remembered that to Charles belongs the credit of appointing Sir Christopher Wren surveyor-general in the room of Sir Thomas Denham, and that to his royal patronage and assistance London owes many of her oldest buildings. A proclamation issued early in the reign orders that future erections should be made in brick or stone, "which would beautify and make uniformity, and which

¹ "Sorbière's Journey," p. 17.

² Evelyn, Vol. I., p. 361.

³ Hatton Correspondence, p. 169.

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are not only more durable and safe against fire, but by experience are found to be of little more, if not less, charge than the building with timber."

Walpole finds fault with Charles's taste in architecture as being tinged too much by the French school, and complains that he caused this model to be introduced into Windsor Castle ; but, if Charles could have had his way, Christopher Wren would have made London the finest capital in the world ; only the prejudices of the citizens with regard to narrow streets and ancient landmarks prevented the design.

To Charles the nation owes the public employment of Grinling Gibbons, the greatest artist in wood-carving known to any country ; Evelyn found him working at Sayes Court, Deptford, on a picture by Tintoretto and introduced him to the King, who promptly gave him a place on the Board of Works, where his services might become available by Wren, who entrusted to him the carving of the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral.¹

Windsor Castle, which Evelyn, the chronicler of all things appertaining to art in those days, found " extremely ragged and ruinous," also was restored and refurnished by Charles, " who took more delight in it than in any other palace." ²

The change which spread over the literature of the country at the Restoration may be largely attributed to the personality of Charles himself. His own wit and his love for wit in others created an atmosphere which influenced, in many particulars, authors and their works and assisted in producing that brilliancy which characterises the literary expression of the period.

Dryden knew the King intimately, and, undoubtedly, was swayed by his suggestions. Although Dryden's works may be said, in some respects, to be poetry with a purpose, and that purpose political only, yet, as has been well expressed, " these writings were of use in the most desperate struggle, short of open warfare, in which an English sovereign

¹ Evelyn, Vol. II., p. 5.

² Aurelian Cook.

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has ever been engaged.”¹ They possess the spirit of true literature, their workmanship is superb, and, taken for all in all, they still stand supreme. Butler, too, received great admiration from Charles, who always carried a copy of the immortal “Hudibras” in his pocket; while in the drama, whether tragedy or comedy, the influence of the King and the court, for good or evil, is apparent in every line.

It is difficult to reconcile the diverse sides of the character of this Stuart king; to imagine him one hour listening to the obscenities of Rochester or Sedley, the next discoursing on bees, or discussing the movements of the planet Saturn with Evelyn. It is equally hard to believe that he, who took pleasure in the society of Sir William Petty, Christopher Wren, or Sir Robert Moray should also consort with the Chiffins and the Prodgers of his court, though the first, probably, had some knowledge of art, and the second must have been a remarkable man in every respect, if the record of him is true—that he died at the age of ninety-six of cutting his teeth, and that he had a daughter who bore a marked resemblance to Charles II.; the latter assertion being of easier belief than the former.²

The Rye House plot gave Charles a distaste for Newmarket, and the cold damp air of the eastern counties did not agree with him so well in his later years as it had done in his robust youth. Whilst travelling through the southern counties he stayed at Winchester, and took a hearty liking both to the old city and its neighbourhood. He commissioned Wren to build a palace for him there, and frequently, as was his wont when interested, visited the works in progress.

There is a story told that on one of these occasions, being accompanied by Nell Gwyn, the King stayed at the house of the bishop and probably amused himself with fishing, his favourite pursuit, in the Itchen. Nelly was to have found quarters in one of the prebendal lodgings, it being the custom of the minor cathedral clergy to give house room

¹ Saintsbury, “Dryden.”

² Grammont, “Notes,” p. 381.

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to the attendants at the court. The prebend on this occasion, a brilliant preacher with a most mellifluous voice, Ken, strenuously refused to vacate his house "for any of that sort," so Nelly was obliged to seek refuge elsewhere.

This incident procured for the bold ecclesiastic a bishopric. Charles hearing that the see of Bath and Wells was vacant, with his usual cynical good humour said: "Give it to the little black man who refused poor Nelly a bed."

Owing either to the improvement in his health from the change of air, or more probably to the political instinct which told him that the national affairs were not going well, Charles, in 1684, began to take a renewed interest in public life.

A year before, in 1683, he gave his consent to the marriage of his niece Anne, the heiress presumptive to the throne, her elder sister Mary, the wife of William of Orange, being childless. True to the alliance with France, when the marriage of the princess became desirable, search was made for a partner who would be agreeable to French susceptibilities, the choice being limited, as a husband of Protestant principles was essential.

The honour fell to Prince George, brother to the King of Denmark, who fulfilled all the requirements both with regard to religion and friendship to Louis.

George proved a nonentity in every respect, his only qualifications being that he was very fat, loved news, his bottle and his wife.¹

Having made this concession to France, Charles began to pay greater heed to the councils of Halifax, who, as James continued to display more and more wrongheadedness, gradually resumed much of his former influence.

Early in 1683 Halifax learnt from secret sources that owing to the lax management of the Commissioners of the Treasury, over which Rochester presided, a sum of no less than £40,000 per annum was lost in farming the chimney tax. Rochester highly resented the imputation of incapacity, and declared that such allegations of fraud were completely

¹ "James' Life," p. 745.

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false. For awhile he triumphed and the charge apparently fell through ; then in July, 1684, a vacancy occurred among the Commissioners, and Rochester hoped that at last he might obtain the culmination of his desires, that the Board would be abolished and he himself obtain the white staff of the Lord Treasurer.

~~X~~At this opportune moment Charles, with something of his old adroitness, interposed.

At the time, many years before, when Temple attempted to remodel the Government and created a new Privy Council, the post of Lord President, a highly important office, was conferred on Lord Shaftesbury. The Council of Temple proved stillborn, and, after the dismissal of the able Shaftesbury, the presidency became a sinecure, held in 1684 by the old Puritan Lord Robartes, newly created Earl of Radnor.

Radnor died. To the surprise of the political world and to the consternation of himself, Rochester received the appointment of Lord President from the King. The blow was heavy, and Halifax's sneer had great effect: "I have heard of a man being kicked downstairs ; I never before heard of him being kicked upstairs." ¹

It is not easy to penetrate what may have been Charles's design. Wellwood utters the distinct prophecy that there was in prospect "a mighty change in the affairs of England. If he had lived but a few weeks longer, Monmouth had been recalled to court, the Duke of York had been sent beyond the sea and a new Parliament convened." ² Possibly it is a fact—Monmouth recorded it in his diary—that he came surreptitiously to England, received a secret interview from Charles, and returned to Holland in December, 1684 ; also there is some evidence to show that preparations were made for James to visit Scotland in the coming year. The rest is surmise, but enough is known to account for the state of extreme perturbation into which James and his followers fell.

The King appointed a day for the Privy Council to

¹ Reresby, p. 292 ; Burnet, Vol. I., p. 349.

² Wellwood's Memoirs, p. 134.

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investigate the alleged frauds on the revenue ; the ruin of Rochester, James's chief supporter, appeared imminent. Then the aspect of the political horizon completely changed.

On the 2nd February, when rising in the morning, Charles was stricken down by a sudden attack of illness. Many accounts of this seizure exist, until lately his end being always attributed to apoplexy.¹

Even to those who do not possess knowledge of medical science or the most rudimentary acquaintance with the symptoms of disease, the circumstances connected with Charles's death appear to be quite inconsistent with an attack of apoplexy, as commonly understood.

The King lived for four days after the first fit. During much of that time he not only retained his senses, but also a considerable portion of his intellectual acumen. At the time of his death the thought of poison entered many minds. The idea of poison always, in those days, more or less accompanied the decease of a monarch, even James I. being described as poisoned by Buckingham's mother who administered an envenomed plaster to his stomach.

The sudden end of Charles II. came so opportunely for his successor that suspicions of poisoning naturally arose, especially as, even at the time, the symptoms appeared to differ considerably from those usually attributed to the disease given as the cause of death.

Modern science, probably, has found the solution of the difficulty, and one distinguished writer, who made a close and particular study of the case, from the evidence at his command, comes to the conclusion, which commends itself to competent physicians, that Charles died from chronic granular kidney disease, accompanied by uræmic convulsions and coma.²

Many accounts, diverse in detail but identical in the main features, are given of his death. All writers agree that the King had been unwell for some time. He suffered from a sore in his leg which would not heal and presented indica-

¹ Hatton Correspondence, Vol. II., p. 52.

² Raymond Crauford, "Last days of Charles II."

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tions of an abscess. On a previous occasion he seems to have been afflicted in a similar manner.

“His Majesty had hurt his hand in 1670, which he entrusted his chirurgeon to make well ; but they ordered him so that they made it worse and it *swoll* and pained him to the shoulder, so that he could not sleep and began to be feaverish.”

“She [Sir C. Wren’s sister, the wife of Dr. Holden] presently made ready a poultiss and applied it and gave his Majesty sudden ease and he slept well. Next day she dressed him and perfectly cured it, to the great grief of the surgeons, who envied and hated her.”¹

At the time of Charles’s seizure, Dr. King, a surgeon apothecary, was attending him for the sore leg and opportunely happened to be present when the King fell senseless. Acting on the principle, then an insatiable habit with the physicians of the period, that the human race in all cases of illness should be treated like veal, Dr. King bled Charles, an act requiring some courage, as only the sworn surgeons could thus treat the sovereign without an order from the Privy Council.

The physicians in ordinary being hastily summoned, met together, discussed the case, and then proceeded to administer the drastic remedies in common use among the medical faculty, a treatment so severe as to leave a feeling of wonder that any human being should survive such torture. The object being, as tersely described by Roger North, first to get him awake and then to keep him from sleeping,² the physician thought the best means to achieve the end would be to apply cupping-glasses, a deep scarification, an emetic, strong purgatives, a large blister to the head, and, at last, actual cautery.

Complete unanimity reigned among the learned men, the records of the case being preserved in the library of the Society of Antiquaries ; so thus one of Burnet’s statements is refuted, that the doctors quarrelled over the symptoms.

¹ Aubrey, “Brief Lives.”

² North, “Examen,” p. 648.

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When Charles regained consciousness he uttered the name of his wife, Catherine. The unfortunate Queen at once hurried to see him, but, being overcome with the sight, quickly retired in floods of tears, and, on regaining her own apartments, fainted, whereupon the doctors bled her also.

The Duke of York and several officers of State were in attendance, and by the afternoon the King's illness seemed to have taken a favourable turn, which being announced the whole of London rejoiced, Charles being immensely popular with his people, especially with the humbler portion who loved his good nature and his attachment to all manly sports.

Whether the doctors knew anything about the disease appears to have been a matter of doubt, even to those persons, not of the faculty, who were present ; for Lord-Keeper North, with evident irritation, complains that when asked what was the matter with the King " they stared and said nothing "—probably a wise proceeding under the circumstances.¹

On Thursday they changed the treatment, and one of them uttered the imprudent remark : " We now know what to do." When immediately pressed by North as to what that might be, the physician gravely replied : " To give the cortex," which they did with no ill results, as the King then lay *in extremis mortis*.

There is some uncertainty as to what took place in the chamber of the dying Charles, Burnet and others, for their own ends, recording varied versions ; but one attached friend remained by Charles's side through his long agony, and to his story credence may be given.

Thomas Bruce, Earl of Aylesbury, happened to be the gentleman of the bedchamber who, being in the room when the first fit occurred, induced the surgeon to bleed the patient, which being done, he remained by the King whenever permitted to do so.

On Thursday afternoon the convulsions recommenced, and then the bishops were summoned—the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of London, Durham and Ely, together with Ken, only a fortnight before consecrated

¹ North, "Examen," p. 650.



THE EARL OF AYLESBURY.
From the Painting at Bicton House.

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Bishop of Bath and Wells. The archbishop being timid and inaudible, Ken, with his beautiful voice, read the prayers for the sick and dying and asked the King if he repented of his sins, at the same time reminding him that he lay under no obligation to confess.

Charles earnestly saying that he was sorry, the bishop gave the absolution, and then solemnly asked the King if he would wish to receive the sacrament, on which, so Aylesbury says, "the King thanked them very much and told them it was time enough and then modestly waived them."

In the meanwhile Barillon, the French ambassador and a great supporter of James, went to condole with the Duchess of Portsmouth, whom he found, naturally enough, in deep affliction. Barillon has written an account of the whole proceeding which in no way conflicts seriously with other narrators, and in a degree assists in supplying their omissions and in providing a solution for some of the difficulties which varying versions create.

A most important statement in his relation is to the effect that the Duchess of Portsmouth first made the suggestion that a Roman Catholic priest should be sent forthwith to Charles. "She declared, as the greatest secret in the world, and one which would endanger her head if known, that the King of England at the bottom of his heart was a Catholic; that being surrounded by Protestant bishops nobody tells him his condition or speaks to him of God." She further pressed on Barillon that, as the Queen was constantly in her husband's room, she, the duchess, "could not with decency" go there. James was so occupied with affairs concerning his own succession that he would think of nothing else, then she concluded by exclaiming: "Go and tell him I have conjured you to warn him to think of what can be done to save the King's soul."¹

Acting on this entreaty Barillon told James, who readily agreed to such a course, that which the duchess suggested, and they then proceeded to consider the best means of putting the idea into operation.

¹ Dalrymple, p. 152.

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Difficulties existed in ascertaining what might be Charles's wishes on the subject, and even greater obstacles would be found in the way of obtaining admission for a priest to the bedchamber, where the bishops still attended the dying King.

James, in a whisper, communicated the proposal to Charles, who is reported to have signified his assent by saying once or twice, "Yes, with all my heart," although from his extreme weakness he frequently could not hear the words his brother spoke to him, who had to repeat them several times.

Both James and Barillon experienced considerable difficulty in finding a priest who could attend the King. The Queen's chaplains being all Portuguese and those of the Duchess of York Italian, none of them could speak English. In this dilemma Barillon thought of applying to the Venetian ambassador and took the Count de Castelmelhor into his confidence, who in passing through the ante-chamber observed among the Queen's priests, Father John Huddleston, a Scotsman, and promptly returned with him to a small room immediately adjoining the apartment in which the King lay.

Huddleston, whom Charles knew well—for after the fight at Worcester he risked his own life to save that of the King and also fed and clothed the fugitive—occupied the peculiar position of being excepted by name in all penal Acts directed against his creed. A modest man, he deprecated having such a solemn and important task placed on him as the Duke of York proposed, but ultimately yielded to persuasion, and James contriving to clear the room, on pretence of discussing great State business with the King, Chiffinch brought Huddleston in by the secret privy stairs.

At once the priest confessed Charles and then gave the absolution, the communion and the extreme unction. According to Barillon, a statement of extreme significance, James himself uttered the words usually attributed to the King, his brother: "Sire, here is a man who saved your life and now comes to save your soul."

It is obvious that if, as Burnet and others declare, Charles himself thus addressed the priest, such an exclamation

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showed a deep and heartfelt desire to express, before too late, a convinced belief in the doctrines of which Huddleston was the exponent ; but if, as Barillon expressly states, James used the expression, the special significance is lost, and the remark only becomes a natural introduction, at a supreme moment, of a priest to a dying man.

The accounts of the various narrators leave a strong impression that Charles was converted and received into the Roman Catholic Church on his deathbed.

Barillon states that the Count of Castelmelhor had taken care to have Huddleston instructed by a Portuguese monk of the barefooted Carmelites in that which he had to say to the King on such an occasion, "for of himself he was no great doctor."¹

It is hardly possible to believe that a priest of Huddleston's age and experience would require instruction to fit him to give the last sacrament and consolation to the dying, but being "no doctor," he might well require guidance as to the proper method to employ in receiving a new convert into the bosom of his Church. All Roman Catholics accept the view that Charles made a deathbed conversion, although many contend that during his life he felt sympathy with the tenets of that faith in which, certainly, he died.

In relating the details of the end of this Stuart king few writers can refrain from making reflections on his character, describing him as a victim to his vices, attributing his sufferings to his sins.

And yet there is much in the last moments of Charles which is not only pathetic, but shows the very fibre and grain of his nature.

Bearing his acute sufferings with manly courage and patience, with his mind unclouded and his intellect undimmed, even the old graceful turns of his speech did not desert him. Worn with pain, he more than once wished all were over ; and to those who by their office were constrained to continue in waiting upon him, he apologised for being so long dying.

¹ Dalrymple, p. 156.

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“ Draw the curtains ; I would wish to see the light of the rising sun once more,” he requested ; and then “ he frequently expressed a hope in God’s mercy.” He spoke with kindness and tenderness to the brother whose throne he, by his determination and skill, had preserved in one of the most severe political struggles known to history, asking his pardon and calling him the best of brothers and friends. He blessed his children one by one, and afterwards, at the request of the bishops, also gave his blessing, as an anointed king, to all who were present ; and when they, full of emotion, knelt before him, he raised himself up and asked pardon of all for the faults he had committed as their sovereign. His dying actions were full of the dignity of a king and a gentleman, and, although some have censured his last words as showing that his thoughts were on his concubine, Christian charity may yet find traces even of pathetic repentance in the answer he gave to his Queen when she besought his forgiveness : “ She ask my pardon ! Poor lady ; I beg hers with all my heart ” ; and a touch, not of lust, but of kindly care for one who lived dependent on his bounty when, turning to his brother, he said : “ Do not let poor Nelly starve ! ”

Monarchs have ruled this country who, their private lives not being too closely investigated, are credited with many domestic virtues, and are known by the epithet of “ The Good ” ; others by their victories and achievements have earned the designation of “ The Great,” notwithstanding that their social sins were highly reprehensible.

Charles II. can be included in neither of the above categories ; but still scant justice has hitherto been dealt to him, his private excesses being the subject of unrestricted censure, his public policy being misrepresented and misunderstood.

To attempt to condone the immorality of his private life would be improper if not impossible ; but although he followed too closely the abominable libertinism of his day, although, by his example as a king, he encouraged the evil living which saturated a large portion of his subjects, yet

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it may be said that, in this respect, he sinned no more than the majority of men of high rank who surrounded him, and that, with all his immorality, no allegation was ever made against him that he at any time violated the sanctity of married life; on the contrary, the constant gibe of his court was to the effect that his mistresses were always "resigned to him," and, as Halifax says: "Of a man who was so capable of choosing he chose as seldom as any man that ever lived."¹

This palliation, small as it is, is all, perhaps, that can be given to Charles's character, but to his policy, domestic and foreign, a degree of appreciative consideration may be assigned, instead of the almost universal condemnation which historians, some biassed, some through want of critical analysis, have bestowed upon it.

To increase and foster the commercial enterprise of the nation and to effect a wide religious toleration, to which he pledged himself at the Restoration, these were the two main points in the domestic policy of Charles. His foreign policy depended on them also.

Any attempt to increase the naval or commercial power of England inevitably produced war with Holland; under such circumstances an alliance with France was a wise and natural course to pursue.

When Charles endeavoured to redeem the promise, made at Breda, to grant liberty of conscience to all his subjects who abided by the law—a promise which, as he said, nearly concerned his honour—he found strong and persistent opposition from his Parliament, who, in order to withstand his demand and compel him to assent to their own schemes of religious persecution, continuously refused to supply the Government with the funds necessary to carry on the administration of the country.

This attitude of Parliament, coupled with the fact that the supply when voted invariably fell short of the minimum required for the purpose, whatsoever it might be, afforded both the reason and the excuse for Charles's conduct in

¹ Halifax, "A Character of Charles II.," Vol. II., p. 349.

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receiving large sums of money from France, and the assertion can be substantiated that, without the financial assistance derived from this source, the Government and defence of the country could not have been carried on.

It is alleged that Parliament was driven to deny money to the Sovereign as the only means by which it could demonstrate the fear, both natural and justifiable, that the King intended to foist on the country the religion it most detested, Roman Catholicism. The assumption that all his life Charles was secretly a member of the Roman Catholic Church cannot be sustained. As aforesaid, to a man trained in his school of misfortune, vagabondage, and intolerance the dogmas of any special creed presented no attraction ; but as he declared in his speech to the House of Commons in January, 1662 : " I am in my nature an enemy to all severity for religion and conscience, how mistaken so ever it be."

While honestly and sincerely desiring tolerance, he never attempted in any way to diminish the power or privileges of the Church of England ; and even if possibly he may have formed an idea of bringing about a reconciliation with the see of Rome—the information concerning which is vague and undefined and the authenticity not above suspicion—it appears to have been in the direction of healing the schism and drawing into one universal Church all consenting to be ruled in things spiritual by an episcopal Government, an idea which found adherents so late as the nineteenth century.

It is a favourite allegation against Charles that he, at heart, desired to be an absolutely despotic monarch, free from all control or supervision by Parliament. To estimate men and policies justly and critically they, and the motives which controlled them, should be judged, not by the ideal of perfection, but by the standard of the times in which they lived.

To compare, as has been done, the relations which existed between Queen Victoria and her people and between Charles and his subjects is as much out of place as to declare that Charles did not possess the continence of Queen Elizabeth—

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a statement which, though true, might be fruitful in many interesting hypotheses.

Until the reign of Charles II. the sovereign of England was the embodiment of the Government ; the House of Commons, with whom rested the financial control, voted to the King certain moneys, raised in the way they deemed best, for the purpose of maintaining, at his discretion, the dignity of the Crown and the safety of the country. Charles at the commencement of his reign exercised this privilege, but only a few years after his accession the House of Commons introduced an innovation and appropriated or earmarked its supplies for special purposes.

This custom is in operation to-day and now forms an integral part of our financial system, but to Charles and his ministers it appeared to be not only highly inconvenient, but a direct invasion of the royal prerogative, as, in truth, it was.

Charles desired to free himself from this irksome control. He held his Parliament in very low estimation, an opinion which the corruption, the religious intolerance and the political incompetence of the House of Commons largely justified ; but there is no evidence that he wished to act in the autocratic manner which marked his father's reign, or to ride rough-shod over the convictions of his subjects in the manner which subsequently entailed his brother's downfall. Indeed, he possessed far too keen a knowledge of human nature, he was in all respects much too observant a man, to believe that any King of England could be a despot, and his fixed determination " never to go again on his travels " was quite sufficient to prevent him ever aspiring to be one.

To describe Charles II.—some distinguished authors have done so—as a dissolute idler who lounged his life away, careless of all that went on around him, unless it ministered to his ease or his pleasure, is to ignore the fact that he alone maintained the right of his brother, the legitimate heir to the throne, against the opposition of his Parliament, his ministers, and, not least, his mistress, and despite the widespread unpopularity that brother incurred.

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To call him—again learned writers have chosen to do so—the most worthless monarch that ever sat on the British throne, is to challenge the fact that the war with Holland gave to England the sovereignty of the seas, the nucleus of her magnificent colonial empire, and a vast accretion of trade and commercial influence; while the alliance with France left this country at peace when the continent of Europe lay devastated by war.

The immorality of Charles was great, his personal failings were many, but as a king, he, by his individual endeavours, initiated a policy which, in his own time of much advantage to his country, now, in its complete fulfilment has ensured the salvation of the Empire and, as all sound and experienced statesmen testify, alone can give the blessings of peace and liberty to the civilised world.

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